

## CHAPTER 4

# OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS

*“From 1942 to the present, shock units or special assault teams have been used by attackers (and often by defenders) with great success. These assault teams are characterized by integration of combined arms. Assault teams typically contain Infantry with variable combinations of armor, artillery, or engineers.”*

Technical Memorandum 5-87  
Modern Experience in City Combat  
US Army Human Engineering Laboratory  
March, 1987

### Section I. OFFENSIVE CONSIDERATIONS

Offensive operations in urban areas are based on offensive doctrine modified to conform to the urban terrain. Urban combat also imposes a number of demands that are different from other field conditions such as combined arms integration, fires, maneuver, and use of special equipment. As with all offensive operations, the commander must retain his ability to fix the enemy and maneuver against him. Offensive UO normally have a slower pace and tempo than operations in other environments. Unlike open terrain, units cannot maneuver quickly, even when mounted. Missions are more methodical. Brigades must be prepared to operate independently or within a division or joint task force (TF). The brigade and its subordinate battalion TFs must also be prepared to conduct different missions simultaneously. For example, a battalion may establish checkpoints in one section of a city and clear enemy in another section simultaneously.

#### 4-1. REASONS FOR ATTACKING URBAN AREAS

Reasons for attacking urban areas include the following:

- a. The results of the commander and staff's estimate may preclude bypassing as an option. The mission itself may dictate an attack of an urban area.
- b. Cities control key routes of commerce and provide a tactical advantage to the commander who controls them. Control of features, such as bridges, railways, and road networks, can have a significant outcome on future operations. The requirement for a logistics base, especially a port or airfield, may play a pivotal role during a campaign.
- c. The political importance of some urban areas may justify the use of time and resources to liberate it. Capturing the city could deal the threat a decisive psychological blow and or lift the moral of the people within the city.
  - (1) The tactical situation may require the enemy force to be contained.
  - (2) The urban area itself may sit on dominating terrain that would hinder bypassing for combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) elements.
  - (3) The enemy within that urban area may be able to interdict lines of communications even though the terrain around an urban area may facilitate its bypass.

#### 4-2. REASONS FOR NOT ATTACKING URBAN AREAS

Conversely, reasons for not attacking urban areas include the following:

a. The commander may decide to bypass if he determines no substantial threat exists in the urban area that could interdict his unit's ability to accomplish its mission. The commander's intent may dictate speed as essential to the mission. Since combat in an urban area is time consuming, the commander may choose to bypass the urban area to save time.

b. During the estimate process, the commander and staff may realize a sufficient force is not available to seize and clear the urban area, or enough forces are available to accomplish the mission but cannot be logistically supported. If the tactical situation allows, the commander should avoid attacks on urban areas.

c. The urban area may be declared an *open city* to prevent civilian casualties or to preserve cultural or historical sites. An open city, by the law of land warfare, is a city that cannot be defended or attacked. The defender must immediately evacuate the open city and cannot distribute weapons to the city's inhabitants. The attacker assumes administrative control of the city and must treat its citizens as noncombatants in an occupied country.

#### 4-3. TROOP REQUIREMENTS

Due to the nature of combat in urban areas, more troops are normally needed than in other combat situations. This situation is due to the number of requirements placed upon units, soldier fatigue, controlling civilians, and evacuation of casualties.

a. Because of the need to clear buildings and provide security, the number of troops required to accomplish an offensive mission is much greater. Some forces must be left behind in a building once it has been cleared to prevent enemy forces from repositioning or counterattacking friendly forces. Commanders and staffs need to be keenly aware that attacking units will effectively lose manpower from assault elements as they secure rooms and floors. They must ensure that the proper force ratios exist to conduct the missions assigned to subordinate units.

b. Commanders must also consider soldier fatigue. Fighting in urban areas is physically demanding and quickly tires a force. Commanders must plan for the relief or rotation of their forces before they reach the point of exhaustion. This situation is facilitated through proper task organization and maintenance of adequate reserves.

c. Additional forces may be needed to deal with noncombatants in the urban area. These forces must protect the noncombatants, provide first aid, and prevent them from interfering with the tactical plan.

d. Fighting in an urban area may result in a greater number of friendly casualties. The greater the restrictions on firepower, the less suppressive fire can be used, and the more the individual soldier is exposed to enemy fire. MEDEVAC/CASEVAC must be planned and subordinate units designated to conduct this task.

#### 4-4. FIRES AND MANEUVER

As in other terrain, units conduct penetrations, envelopments, turning movements, and frontal attacks. Unlike open terrain, commanders cannot maneuver their units and attachments quickly due to the close, dense environment. Clearing buildings and looking for antiarmor ambushes, snipers, and booby traps degrade the ability of subordinate units

to maneuver. Due to the dense environment and its effects on weapon systems, the synchronization of combat power is one of the commander's main challenges. Offensive operations need to be planned in detail, with subordinate elements given specific instructions and on order missions. Maintaining situational awareness assist in overcoming the inability to maneuver quickly.

a. **Indirect Fires.** The fire support plan may require extensive air and artillery bombardment to precede the ground attack on an urban area. Supporting fire suppresses the defender's fire, restricts his movement, and may destroy his position. However, indirect fire in urban areas with heavily clad construction creates rubble, which can be used for cover but may restrict the movements of attacking troops. For that reason, the artillery preparation should be short and violent. Assaulting troops must follow the artillery fire closely to exploit its effect on the defenders. While the supporting fire suppresses the enemy, maneuver units move near the coordinated fire line (CFL). As the attacking force assaults the objective, fires are lifted or shifted to block enemy withdrawal or to prevent the enemy from reinforcing their position.

(1) Prior coordination is critical to determine the techniques and procedures for communication, target identification, and shifting of fires. Consideration must be given to the noncombatants, houses of worship, medical centers, schools, public services, and historical monuments. The fire support plan can include integrating tanks, Infantry weapons, artillery, and dismounted direct and indirect fires.

(2) Indirect fire is planned to isolate objectives, to prevent reinforcement and resupply, to neutralize known and suspected command and observation posts, and to suppress enemy defenders. Most indirect fires are high-angle in urban terrain.

(3) Mortars are the most responsive indirect fires to hit targets of opportunity at the close ranges typical of combat in urban areas. Forward observers move with the forward units to adjust fire on targets as requested by the supported troops.

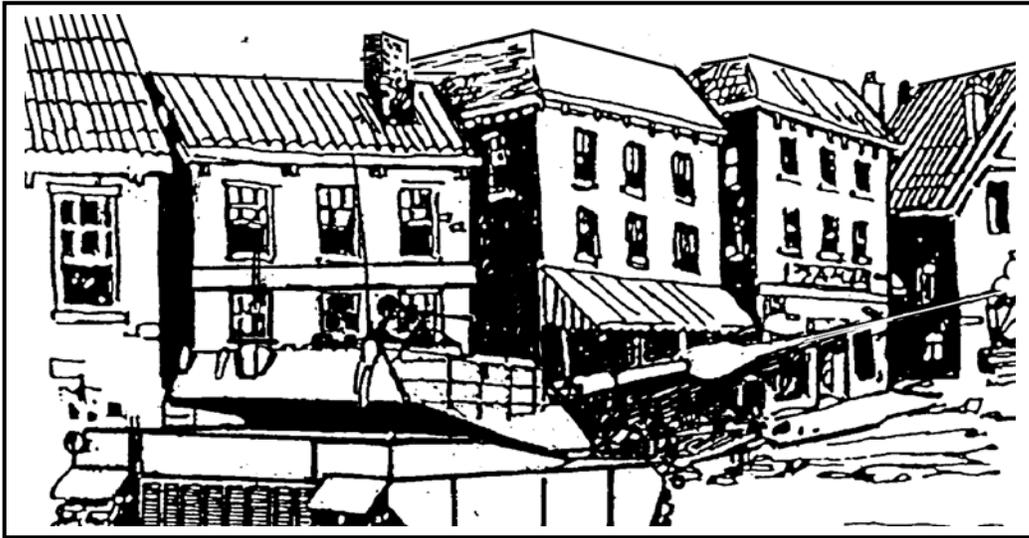
b. **Direct Fires.** Direct-fire is the most effective fire support in urban areas. Once a target can be located in a building, one or two direct-fire rounds can accomplish what entire salvos of indirect fire cannot. The best direct-fire support is provided by Bradley fighting vehicles (BFVs) but can also be provided by tanks and or howitzers. (See Chapter 7 for specific weapons effects.) Tanks and howitzers may create rubble and building and street damage that could restrict movement for the attacking force.

(1) Tanks may support by fire when lead units are seizing a foothold. During the attack of an urban area, tanks overwatch the Infantry's initial assault until an entry into the area has been secured. Tanks are supported by Infantry organic weapons to suppress enemy strongpoints while they move into overwatch positions. Commanders employ tanks to take advantage of the long range of their main gun. This procedure is usually achieved with tanks employed outside the urban area, for the duration of the attack to cover high-speed mounted avenues of approach, especially during the isolation phase. Tanks may also support Infantry in the urban area as an assault and support weapon. In both cases, Infantry must protect tanks.

(2) In house-to-house and street fighting, tanks and or BFVs move down streets protected by the Infantry, which clears the area of enemy ATGM weapons. Tanks and BFVs in turn support the Infantry by firing their main guns and machine guns to destroy enemy positions. Tanks are the most effective weapon for heavy fire against structures

and may be used to clear rubble with dozer blades (Figure 4-1). The BFV can provide sustained, accurate suppressive fires with its 25-mm gun.

(3) Large-caliber artillery rounds that are shot by direct fire are effective for destroying targets in buildings. If available, self-propelled 155-mm howitzers can use direct fire to destroy or neutralize bunkers, heavy fortifications, or enemy positions in reinforced concrete buildings (Figure 4-2). The self-propelled 155-mm can be used to clear or create avenues of approach. The 105-mm artillery can be used in this role but are not the preferred artillery pieces used in offensive UO. When artillery is used in the direct fire role, it must be close to the Infantry for security against enemy ground attack. Prior coordination must be accomplished so the bulk of the field artillery unit's shells are switched to High Explosive (HE). (See Chapter 7, paragraph 7-12; Chapter 10, paragraph 10-9; and Chapter 12, paragraph 12-2.)

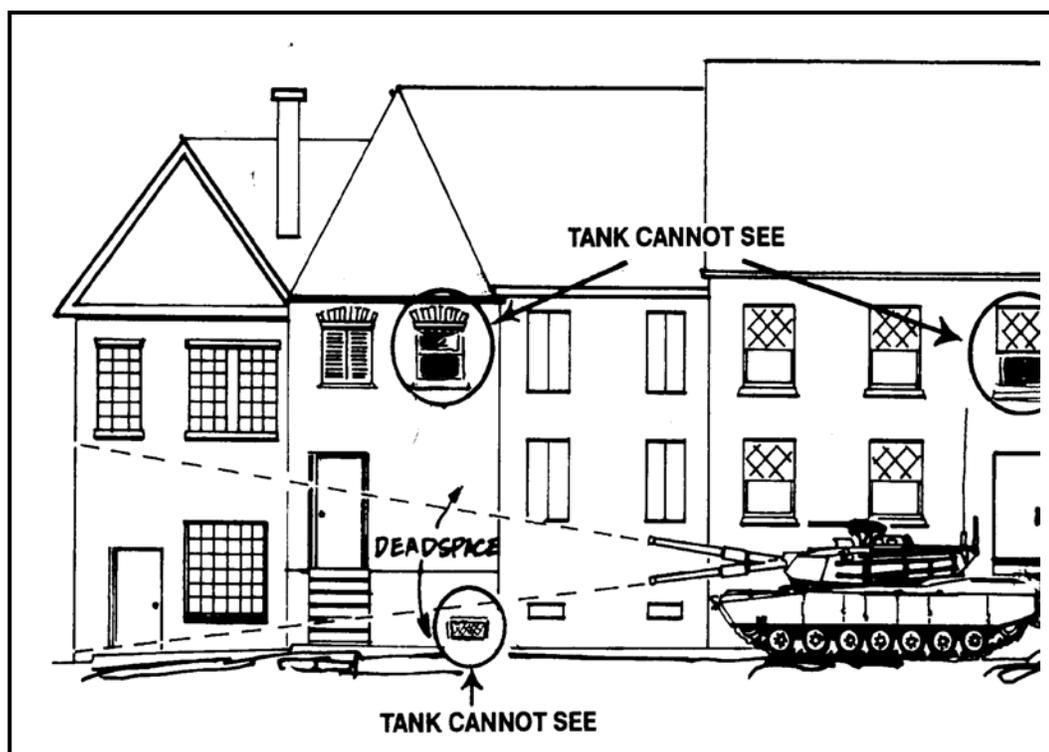


**Figure 4-1. Tank in direct fire supported by Infantry.**



**Figure 4-2. Artillery in direct-fire role.**

(4) Tanks, self-propelled artillery, and BFVs are vulnerable in urban areas because streets and alleys provide ready-made fire lanes for defenders. Motorized traffic is restricted, canalized, and vulnerable to ambush and close-range fire. Tanks are at a further disadvantage because their main guns cannot be depressed sufficiently to fire into basements or elevated to fire into upper floors of buildings at close range (Figure 4-3).



**Figure 4-3. Tank dead space.**

(5) Direct-fire systems organic to Infantry battalions—mainly ATGMs and recoilless weapons, such as the AT4, are initially employed to support the seizure of a foothold. Then, if necessary, they are brought forward to fight enemy armor within the town. Antitank weapons are not as effective as tank rounds for neutralizing targets behind walls. They neutralize a target only if that target is located directly behind the point of impact. ATGMs are at a greater disadvantage because of their 65-meter arming distance and the possibility of their guiding wires becoming caught on ground clutter. These factors limit employment in close engagements like those in urban areas.

(6) Snipers are a valuable asset during urban operations. They must be equipped with effective observation devices and placed in a key area to be effective. In situations where the ROE permit the use of destructive force, snipers can be used as part of the support element to provide accurate, long-range fires. Depending on the commander's concept, snipers can be employed in the counter-sniper role or assigned priority targets. If a restrictive ROE is in effect, snipers may be used to prevent collateral damage. Snipers can also overwatch breaching operations and call for indirect artillery fires. (For more

information on the offensive employment of snipers, see FM 71-2, FM 7-20, TC 23-14, and Chapter 6.)

c. **Maneuver.** The first phase of the attack should be conducted when visibility is poor. Troops can exploit poor visibility to cross open areas, gain access to rooftops, infiltrate enemy areas, and gain a foothold. If the attack must be made when visibility is good, units should consider using smoke to conceal movement.

(1) The formation used in an attack depends on the width and depth of the zone to be cleared, the character of the area, anticipated enemy resistance, and the formation adopted by the next higher command.

(2) Lead companies may have engineers attached for immediate support. Tasks given to the engineers may include:

- Preparing and using explosives to breach walls and obstacles.
- Finding and exploding mines in place or helping remove them.
- Clearing barricades and rubble.
- Cratering roads and other countermobility measures.

(3) When the unit is involved in clearing, bypassing buildings increases the risk of attack from the rear or flank. A single building may be an objective for a rifle squad, or if the building is large, for a rifle platoon or company. When the commander's concept is based on speed or when conducting a hasty attack, a battalion may be directed not to clear its entire zone.

(4) The reserve should be mobile and prepared for commitment. The reserve can stay close to forward units because of the available cover in urban areas. Battalion reserves normally follow one to two blocks to the rear of the lead company. A company reserve, if available, follows within the same block so it can immediately influence the attack. A unit with a reserve mission may be called upon to perform one or more of the following tasks:

- Attacking from another direction.
- Exploiting an enemy weakness or friendly success.
- Clearing bypassed enemy positions.
- Securing the rear or a flank.
- Maintaining contact with adjacent units.
- Supporting or counterattacking by fire.

(5) The battalion reconnaissance scout platoon is normally employed to reconnoiter the battalion's flanks and rear. Its capability for reconnaissance and security is somewhat reduced in urban areas. The reconnaissance/scout platoon can also help isolate a village or small town. They must be prepared to dismount and enter buildings for reconnaissance or for setting up OPs. Infantry platoons and squads conduct reconnaissance patrols and man OPs to supplement the reconnaissance/scout platoon effort.

(6) Security in an urban area presents special problems. All troops must be alert to an enemy that may appear from the flanks, from above, or from subterranean areas.

d. **Movement.** Moving from building to building or between buildings present a problem to units conducting offensive operations. Historical examples, recent operations in Somalia, and the Russian experience in Grozny have shown that most casualties can be expected during movement from building to building and down streets. Therefore, during mission analysis, commanders and staffs should plan operations in such a manner that allow subordinate elements to take maximum advantage of covered and concealed routes

within the urban area. Additionally, commanders and staffs must carefully analyze which buildings must be isolated, suppressed, and obscured, consistent with the ROE, as well as using armored assets as shields for maneuver elements.

(1) In movement down narrow streets, or down wider streets with narrow paths through the debris, Infantry should move ahead of the tanks clearing the buildings on each side. Personnel movement across open areas must be planned with a specific destination in mind. Street intersections should be avoided, since they are normally used as engagement areas. Suppression of enemy positions and smoke to cover Infantry movement should also be included in the fire support plan. When needed, tanks move up to places secured by the Infantry to hit suitable targets. When an area is cleared, the Infantry again moves forward to clear the next area. Tanks and Infantry should use the traveling overwatch movement technique and communicate with tank crews by using arm-and-hand signals and radio.

(2) For movement down wider streets, Infantry platoons normally have a section of attached tanks with one tank on each side of the street. Single tanks should not be employed. Other tanks of the attached tank platoon should move behind the Infantry and fire at targets in the upper stories of buildings. In wide boulevards, commanders may employ a tank platoon secured by one or more Infantry platoons. The Infantry can secure the forward movement of the lead tanks, while the trailing tanks overwatch the movement of the lead units.

(3) If an Infantry unit must travel along streets that are too narrow for mutual tank support, the tanks travel in single file for support. The tanks move and fire to cover each other's approach while the Infantry provides ATGM fire from buildings as necessary.

(4) Tanks may drive inside buildings or behind walls for protection from enemy antitank missile fire where feasible. Buildings are cleared by the Infantry first. Ground floors are checked to ensure they support the tank and there is no basement into which the tank could fall. When moving, all bridges and overpasses are checked for mines, booby traps, and load capacity. Specific Infantry elements are assigned to protect specific tanks.

#### 4-5. LIMITATIONS

Commanders attacking an urban area must recognize some important limitations in the use of available assets.

a. **Indirect Fires.** Normally, the use of indirect fires is much more restricted in urban areas than in open terrain. Consideration must be given to the effects of the indirect fire on the urban area and noncombatants. This procedure is especially true when extremely restrictive ROE are in effect. When indirect fires are authorized, they must be fired in greater mass to achieve the desired effect. When units are performing multiple missions, indirect fire supporting one element can easily cause casualties in adjacent elements. The rubble caused by massive indirect fires adversely affect a unit's ability to maneuver during the attack.

b. **Noncombatants.** If there are noncombatants intermingled with combatants, the ability to use all available firepower may be restricted.

c. **Night Vision Devices.** Commanders and leaders must consider the effect that city lights, fires, and background illumination have on night vision devices. These elements may limit the effectiveness of night vision goggles (NVGs) and make thermal imagery identification difficult.

d. **Communications.** Communications equipment may not function to its maximum effectiveness because of the density in building construction. Intelligent use of graphic control measures, understanding the commander's intent, and maintaining situational awareness at all levels become more important to mission accomplishment.

## **Section II. MISSION, ENEMY, TERRAIN, TROOPS, TIME, CIVIL FACTORS**

The planning, preparation, and conduct of offensive operations in an urban area are the same as all other offensive operations and must be based on the mission, enemy, terrain, troops, time, and civil (METT-TC) factors. Commanders must focus on the synchronization of maneuver forces and the fire support plan to accomplish the assigned mission. Combat support (CS) and combat service support (CSS) play a critical role in the offense. (See Chapters 13 and 14 for further details on CS and CSS.)

### **4-6. MISSION**

The commander and staff must receive, analyze, and understand the mission before beginning planning. The conditions of the operation; either precision or high intensity; the ROE; and the desired end-state must be clearly understood and stated. As stated earlier, brigades and battalions may be required to conduct different missions simultaneously. A detailed discussion of the urban environment's effects on the planning process is in Chapter 2, Urban Analysis. Additional considerations that are specific to offensive operations are discussed below. When conducting this analysis, commanders and staff must consider the higher level commander's intent. For example, a brigade must determine if supporting efforts are needed to shape the battlefield prior to the main effort executing its mission. A battalion must determine if a mission given to them means clearing every building within an area, block by block, or if the seizure of key terrain only requires clearing along the axis of advance.

a. In certain circumstances, subordinate units may secure rather than clear buildings. Normally, clearing means entering and searching each building to kill, capture, or force the withdrawal of the threat in the zone of action or objective area as well as leaving security to prevent reoccupation of cleared buildings. This procedure may not be feasible due to the nature of the mission and should be made clear when orders are issued. Clearing requires a systematic search of every room. Securing means a search of selected areas and preventing the occupation or reoccupation of the area by the threat and questioning of noncombatants, if present.

b. Commanders and staffs must also consider how and where the unit is postured in order to conduct follow-on missions to facilitate higher echelon missions, and influences the missions that are given to subordinate units.

c. When the battalion is involved in clearing operations, bypassing buildings increases the risk of attack from the rear or flank unless planned support isolates and suppresses those buildings.

d. A battle may transition quickly from precision to high intensity conditions. The transition can be caused by enemy actions. Commanders must be prepared to request changes in ROE for certain areas or buildings. Indications of an enemy-forced change of ROE (and a change from precision conditions to high intensity) include:

- The requirement to breach multiple obstacles.
- The use of booby traps by the enemy.
- The requirement to use repetitive explosive breaching to enter a building; and rooms.

#### **4-7. ENEMY**

The unique factor the commander must determine to complete the IPB process is the type threat he is attacking—conventional, unconventional or other, such as gangs, factional elements, or organized criminals. The type of threat determines how the unit task-organizes and how combat power is synchronized to accomplish the mission. (See Chapter 2, Section IV.)

#### **4-8. TERRAIN AND WEATHER**

Offensive operations must be tailored to the urban environment based on a detailed analysis of each urban terrain setting, its types of urban areas, and existing structural form. (See Chapter 2, Sections II and III and FM 34-130 for details of urban terrain analysis.) Commanders and subordinate leaders must incorporate the following special planning considerations for an urban environment when conducting an offensive operation.

- a. Alternates for military maps that do not provide enough detail for urban terrain analysis or reflect the underground sewer system, subways, underground water system, mass transit routes, and utility generation.
- b. Natural terrain surrounding the urban area.
- c. Key and decisive terrain (stadiums, parks, sports fields, school playgrounds, public buildings, and industrial facilities).
- d. Confined spaces limiting observation, fields of fire and maneuver, which also prevents the concentration of fires at critical points.
- e. Covered and concealed routes to and within the urban area.
- f. Limited ability to employ maximum combat power due to the need to minimize damage and rubble effects.
- g. A greater demand for ammunition and rations, thus imposing unusual strains on logistics elements.
- h. Problems with conducting effective reconnaissance during conventional operations. (Reconnaissance by force becomes the most effective reconnaissance means. This method involves probing a defense with successively larger units until the enemy positions are disclosed and successfully attacked. During unconventional operations, the opposite is true. Reconnaissance and security are easily accomplished by both sides and may be difficult to prevent.)

#### **4-9. TROOPS AVAILABLE**

Troop density for offensive missions in urban areas can be as much as three to five times greater than for similar missions in open terrain. Urban operations may require unique

task organizations. Commanders must consider providing assets where they are needed to accomplish specific tasks. All phases of mission execution must be considered when developing task organization. Changes in task organization may be required to accomplish different tasks during mission execution. Task organizations could very well change as conditions and missions change. For example, high intensity offensive operations probably require different task organizations from precision offensive operations. Likewise, task organizations change as mission transitions from offense to stability and support and vice-versa. (See brigade, battalion, company, and platoon sections [Sections V, VI, VII, VIII] for specific task organizations and troop considerations.)

#### **4-10. TIME AVAILABLE**

Combat in urban areas has a slower tempo and an increased use of methodical, synchronized missions. Additionally, a brigade or battalion may find itself planning different operations simultaneously. For example, a task force may have the mission to conduct offensive missions in one part of the brigade's AO and another battalion may be conducting stability missions in yet another part of the brigade's AO. In planning UO, the commander and staff must take these factors into account. Plans must also take into account that more time is required for clearing buildings, blocks, or axes of advance due to the density of urban terrain and that troops tire more quickly because of stress and additional physical exertion caused by the environment. More time must be allowed for thorough reconnaissance and subordinate unit rehearsals. Allocating time for rehearsals is especially important when units are not habitually used to working with each other.

#### **4-11. CIVIL CONSIDERATIONS**

The commander and staff must understand the composition, activities, and attitudes of the civilian population, to include the political infrastructure, within the urban area. Various options are available to the commander to control the impact of civilians on the operation such as screening civilians, prohibiting unauthorized movement, diverting or controlling refugee movements, and evacuating. Understanding the urban society requires comprehension of—

- Living conditions.
- Cultural distinctions.
- Ethnicity.
- Factions.
- Religious beliefs.
- Political affiliation and grievances.
- Attitude toward US forces (friendly, hostile, neutral).

See Chapter 13, Section III for additional considerations.

### **Section III. COMMAND AND CONTROL**

Urban operations require centralized planning and decentralized execution. Therefore the staff must develop a detailed plan that synchronizes the BOS in order to meet the commander's intent and also provide subordinate units with the means to accomplish the mission.

#### 4-12. COMMAND

Subordinate units require mission-type orders that are restrictive in nature. Commanders should use detailed control measures to facilitate decentralized execution. Increased difficulties in command, control, and communications from higher headquarters demand increased responsibility and initiative from subordinate leaders. Understanding of the commander's intent two levels up by all leaders becomes even more important to mission accomplishment in an urban environment.

#### 4-13. CONTROL

Control of the urban battlefield is difficult. In urban areas, radio communications are often less effective than field telephones and messengers. Units often fight without continuous communications, since dependable communications are uncertain. Pyrotechnic signals are hard to see because of buildings and smoke. The high noise level of battles within and around buildings degrades voice alerts. Voice communication can also signal the unit's intention and location to the enemy. Graphic control measures common to other tactical environments are also used in urban combat. These and other control measures ensure coordination throughout the chain of command, enhance the mission, and thus prevent fratricide. Thorough rehearsals and detailed backbriefs also enhance control. It is also important that subordinate leaders clearly understand the commander's intent (two levels up) and the desired mission end state in order to facilitate control. Commanders should consider using the executive officer (XO), the S3, and other staff members to control certain portions of the fight, when the commander's attention needs to be focused elsewhere.

a. **Radio Communications.** Radio communications in urban areas pose special problems to tactical units. Communications equipment may not function properly because of the massive construction of buildings and the environment. In addition to the physical blockage of line of sight transmissions, there is also the interference from commercial power lines, absorption into structures and the presence of large quantities of metal in structures. Leaders should consider these effects when they allocate time to establish communications. Unit SOPs become much more important in urban terrain. The time needed to establish an effective communications system might be greater in urban areas. Leaders should consider the following techniques when planning for radio communications:

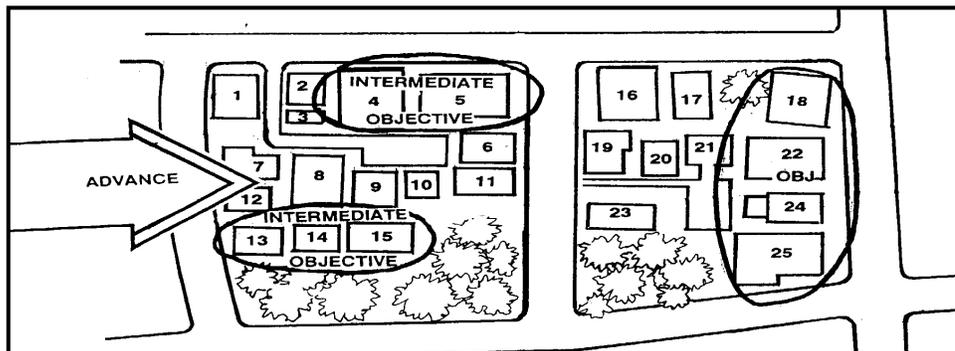
- Emplace radios and retransmission sites on the upper floors of buildings. Radio antennas should blend in with the building structure so as not to be easily identifiable to the enemy.
- Construct field expedient antennas to enhance capabilities.
- RTOs should utilize an earpiece to keep their hands free in order to write messages and use their weapon to defend themselves.
- Use windows and holes in walls to extend antennas for better communications.
- Open doors and windows to enhance the flow of FM signals.

b. **Other Types of Communications.** Wire laid at street level is easily damaged by rubble and vehicle traffic. Also, the noise of urban combat is much louder than in other areas, making sound or verbal signals difficult to hear.

- Develop and utilize other nonverbal signals. Use color-coded signaling devices per unit SOP. Marking areas as the unit moves is a key to success. (See Appendix I.)
- If possible, lay wire through buildings for maximum protection.
- Use existing telephone systems. Telephones are not always secure even though many telephone cables are underground.
- Use messengers at all levels since they are the most secure means of communications.

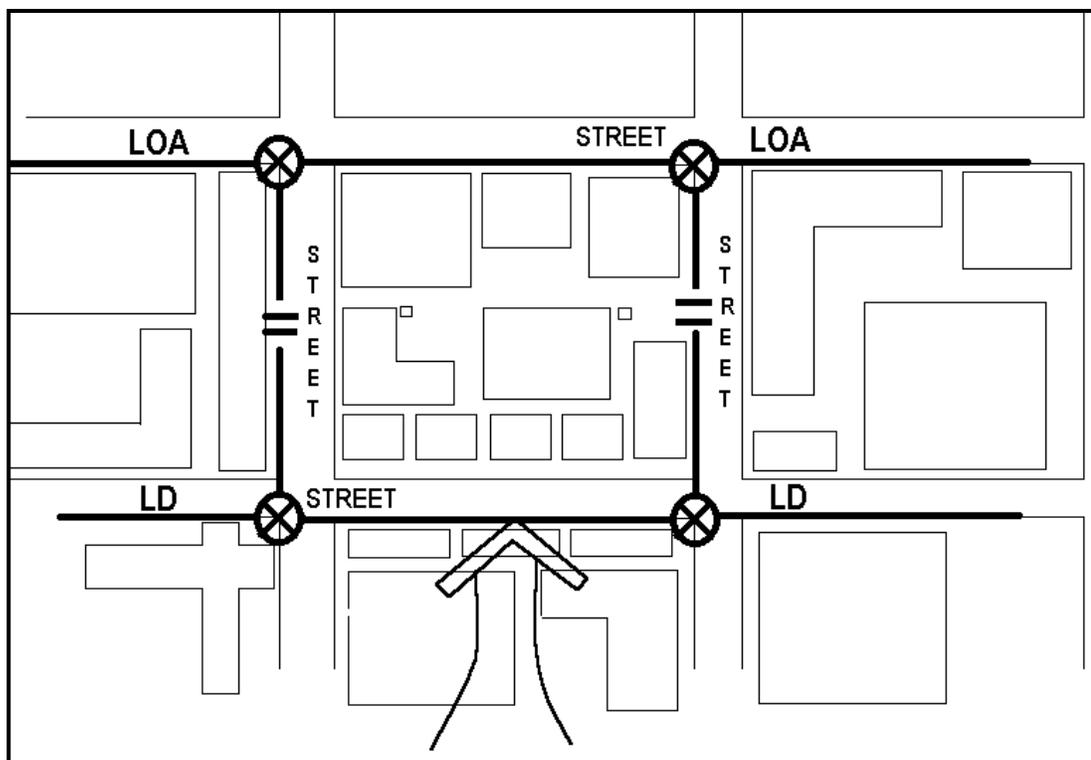
c. **Graphic Control Measures.** The use of detailed graphic control measures is critical to mission accomplishment and fratricide avoidance in urban terrain. Phase lines can be used to report progress or to control the advance of attacking units. Limits of advance should be considered. Principal streets, rivers, and railroad lines are suitable phase lines or limits of advance. Examples are shown below.

(1) When attacking to seize a foothold, a battalion normally assigns each company a sector or a group of buildings as its first objective. When an objective extends to a street, only the near side of the street is included in the objective area. Key buildings or groups of buildings may be assigned as intermediate objectives. The battalion's final objective may be a group of buildings within the built-up area, key terrain, or nodes, depending on the brigade's mission. To simplify assigning objectives and reporting, all buildings along the route of attack should be identified by letters or numbers (Figure 4-4). Mixing numbers and letters may help differentiate between blocks as an attack progresses.



**Figure 4-4. Example of a numbering system.**

(2) Phase lines can be used to report progress or to control the advance of attacking units (Figure 4-5). Phase lines should be on the near side of the street or open area. In systematic clearing, a unit may have the mission to clear its zone of action up to a phase line or limit of advance. In that case, the commander chooses his own objectives when assigning missions to his subordinate units.



**Figure 4-5. Boundaries and phase lines.**

(3) Boundaries are usually set within blocks so that a street is included in the zone. Boundaries must be placed to ensure that both sides of a street are included in the zone of one unit.

(4) Checkpoints and contact points are planned at street corners, buildings, railway crossings, bridges, or any other easily identifiable urban feature.

(5) Forward units may occupy an attack position for last-minute preparation and coordination. The attack position is often behind or inside the last covered and concealed position, such as a large building, before crossing the LD. The LD should be the near side of a street, a rail line, or a row of buildings.

(6) A unit's assigned frontage for the attack of a built-up area depends on the size of buildings and the resistance anticipated. A company normally attacks on a one- to two-block front, and a battalion on a two- to four-block front, based on city blocks averaging 175 meters in width.

#### **4-14. FOCUS ON THE THREAT**

During the mission analysis, the plan should focus on the factors of METT-TC. Make the plan enemy-oriented instead of terrain-oriented. Use terrain factors to defeat the threat—do not attack buildings for the sake of seizing buildings, attack buildings to defeat the threat. Considerations include, but are not limited to, the following:

a. Thorough evaluation of the urban area's related terrain and threat may take much longer than other environments. This time factor also affects friendly planning efforts.

b. Determine the threat's location, strength, and capabilities. Develop a plan that defeats his direct and indirect fire systems.

c. Focus the axis of advance on the threat's weaknesses while maintaining adequate force protection measures. When possible employ multiple and supporting axes of advance.

d. Divide the objective area into manageable smaller areas that facilitate battalion TF maneuver.

e. Isolate the objective area and establish a foothold at the point of entry. The location chosen for the foothold must allow for expansion.

f. The brigade and battalion maneuver plans directly affect the company schemes of maneuver. Every company within the brigade must know what enemy targets will be engaged by brigade and battalion assets.

#### 4-15. COMMANDER'S CRITICAL INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

The commander's critical information requirements (CCIR) directly affect his decisions and dictate the successful execution of tactical operations. The staff must develop the components of CCIR that facilitate the commander's ability to make decisions that impact the plan during urban operations. Logical deductions are that essential elements of friendly information (EEFI) should address the enemy commander's priority intelligence requirements (PIR) and friendly forces information requirements (FFIR) should be items that cause the commander to make decisions that impact the plan. The following are examples of PIR, EEFI, and FFIR that would be more likely to help the commander in an urban environment.

a. **PIR.** These are intelligence requirements that a commander has anticipated and have stated priority in task planning and decision making. Examples include:

- Where are the threat command posts?
- What are the most likely threat infiltration routes into the area of operations?
- What streets and alleys restrict movement of friendly armored and wheeled vehicles?
- Where are the likely threat strong points and engagement areas?
- What is the threat air defense capability against Army aviation assets?

b. **EEFI.** These are critical aspects of a friendly operation that, if known by the threat, would subsequently compromise, lead to failure, or limit success of the operation and, therefore, must be protected from detection. Examples include:

- Is the unit command net vulnerable to intercept, direction finding, and electronic attack?
- Is the unit vulnerable to HUMINT collection and sabotage by local nationals?
- Where are the supply routes/LOC most vulnerable to ambush and snipers?
- Are friendly troop concentrations and movement under threat observation?

c. **FFIR.** This requirement is information the commander and staff need about the friendly forces available for the operation. Examples include:

- Scouts captured or compromised.
- Main bridge locations along the ground route that have been blown.
- OPORD compromised.
- Loss of cryptographic equipment.
- Expected personnel and equipment replacements that did not arrive.

#### **4-16. REHEARSALS**

After developing a thorough, well-synchronized plan, commanders should require subordinate units to conduct combined arms rehearsals and include all phases of the operation. When conducted properly, combined arms rehearsals identify potential problems in the synchronization of the plan between maneuver, combat support, and combat service support elements. Rehearsals provide a means for units that seldom operate together to train collective skills. Carefully consider where rehearsals are conducted within the brigade AO. It is preferable to conduct rehearsals on urban terrain similar to the objective area.

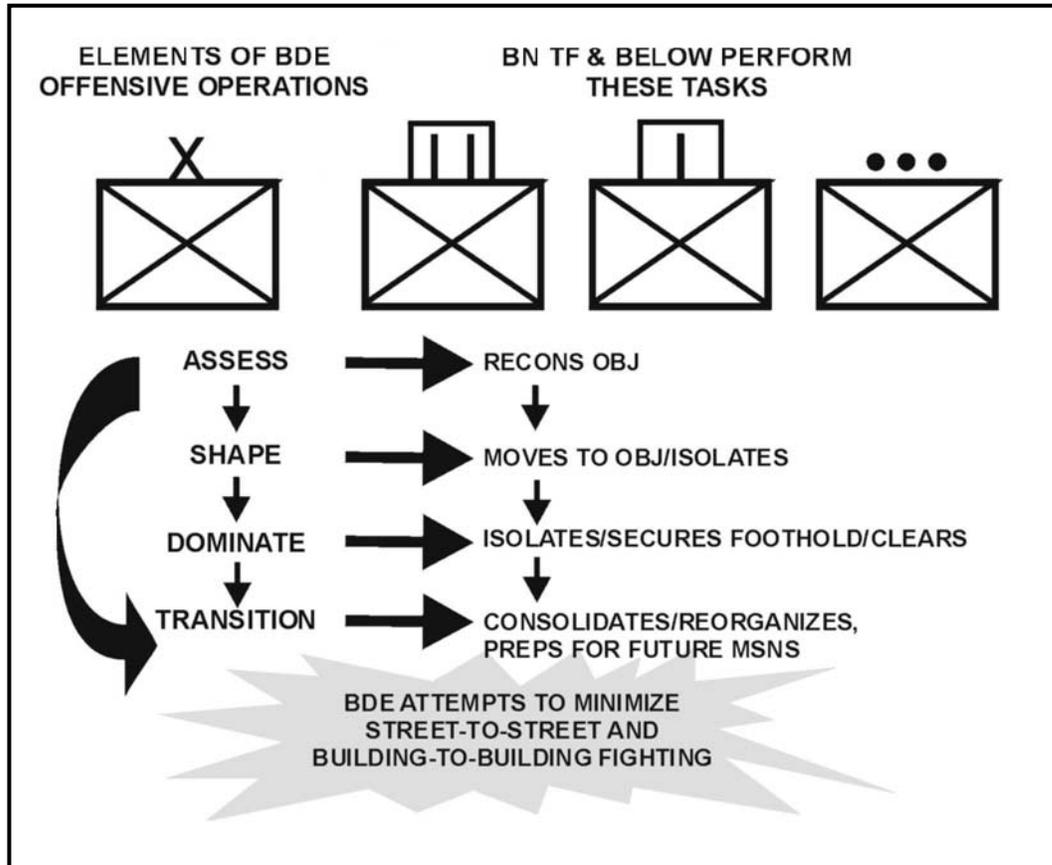
### **Section IV. OFFENSIVE FRAMEWORK AND TYPES OF ATTACKS**

This section discusses the framework that is used and the types of attacks that are conducted during offensive UO.

#### **4-17. OFFENSIVE FRAMEWORK**

Figure 4-6 on page 4-16 depicts the operational framework of brigade urban offensive operations. The brigade commander's primary responsibility is to set the conditions for tactical success for his subordinate units. Whenever possible, close combat by maneuver units is minimized and brigades attempt to move from assess to transition. At the brigade level and below, offensive operations often take the form of either a hasty or deliberate attack. Both hasty and deliberate attacks are characterized by as much planning, reconnaissance, and coordination as time and the situation permit. Battalions and below conduct those attacks executing the tasks shown in Figure 4-6, page 4-16. The elements of offensive operations are not phases. There is no clear line of distinction that delineates when the brigade moves from one element to another. Properly planned and executed operations involve all four elements. They may be conducted simultaneously or sequentially, depending on the factors of METT-TC. During offensive operations, the brigade commander seeks to:

- Synchronize precision fires (lethal and non-lethal effects) and information operations.
- Isolate decisive points.
- Use superior combat power to destroy high pay-off targets.
- Use close combat, when necessary, against decisive points.



**Figure 4-6. Offensive urban operational framework.**

#### **4-18. HASTY ATTACK**

Battalions and companies conduct hasty attacks as a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement, or a chance contact during a movement; after a successful defense or part of a defense; or in a situation where the unit has the opportunity to attack vulnerable enemy forces. When contact is made with the enemy, the commander immediately deploys; suppresses the enemy; attacks through a gap, flank, or weak point; and reports to his higher commander. The preparation for a hasty attack is similar to that of a deliberate attack, but time and resources are limited to what is available. The hasty attack in an urban area differs from a hasty attack in open terrain because the terrain makes command, control, communications and massing fires to suppress the enemy difficult.

a. In urban areas, incomplete intelligence and concealment may require the maneuver unit to move through, rather than around, the friendly unit fixing the enemy in place. Control and coordination become critical to reduce congestion at the edges of the urban area.

b. On-order missions, be-prepared missions, or fragmentary orders may be given to a force conducting a hasty attack so it can react to a contingency once its objective is secured.

#### 4-19. DELIBERATE ATTACK

A deliberate attack is a fully synchronized operation employing all available assets against the enemy. It is necessary when enemy positions are well prepared, when the urban area is large or severely congested, or when the element of surprise has been lost. Deliberate attacks are characterized by precise planning based on detailed information, thorough reconnaissance, preparation, and rehearsals. The deliberate attack of an urban area is similar to the technique employed in assaulting a strong point. Attacking the enemy's main strength is avoided and combat power is focused on the weakest point of his defense. Battalions and below conduct deliberate attacks of an urban area in the phases shown in Figure 4-7. Detailed descriptions of these phases at the battalion, company, and platoon levels are found in Sections VI, VII, and VIII, respectively.

<p><b>Phase 1. Reconnoiter the Objective</b> <b>Phase 2. Move to the Objective</b> <b>Phase 3. Isolate the Objective</b> <b>Phase 4. Secure a Foothold</b> <b>Phase 5. Clear the Objective</b> <b>Phase 6. Consolidate/Reorganize</b> <b>Phase 7. Prepare for Future Missions</b></p>
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**Figure 4-7. Phases of a deliberate urban attack.**

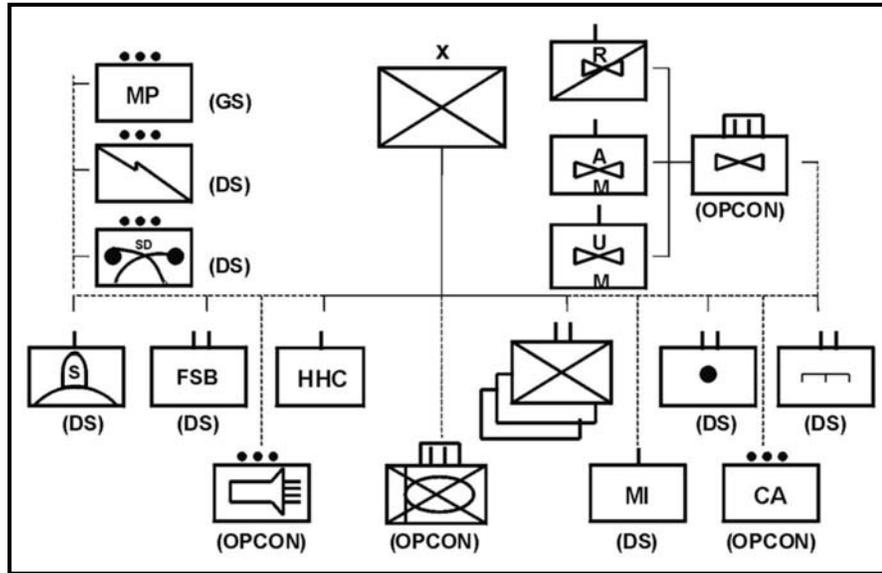
### **Section V. BRIGADE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS**

A brigade may be assigned an objective that lies within an urban area, and may conduct the full range of offensive operations within a single large city or in an AO that contains several small villages and towns.

#### 4-20. TASK ORGANIZATION

Proper task organization is essential for successful execution of offensive UO.

a. During UO, the brigade is often augmented with additional assets, which may include aviation, engineers, signal, smoke and or decontamination, ADA, MI, counterintelligence, MP, public affairs, PSYOP, civil affairs, translators, and LRS assets, when available. The brigade may also receive additional mechanized Infantry or armor. A sample Infantry brigade task organization is shown at Figure 4-8 on page 4-18. Actual task organizations are METT-TC dependent. How the brigade commander task-organizes so that the BOS can be synchronized is of critical importance to tactical success.



**Figure 4-8. Sample UO task organization for an Infantry brigade.**

**NOTE:** The task organization shown in Figure 4-8 would be essentially the same for light, airborne, and air assault Infantry brigades. Heavy brigades would differ based on the composition of their Table of Organization and Equipment (TOE).

b. Urban operations may require unique task organizations. Figure 4-9 depicts a sample brigade task organization for offensive operations, showing units under brigade control, and subordinate task forces necessary to accomplish decisive and shaping operations, specifically, the main and supporting efforts and the brigade reserve. Commanders must consider providing assets where they are needed to accomplish specific tasks. All phases of mission execution must be considered when developing task organization. Changes in task organization may be required to accomplish different tasks during mission execution. Task organizations could very well change from shape through transition.



whether the shaping efforts of higher headquarters permit them to move directly to domination and or transition.

#### 4-22. SHAPE

Brigades normally shape the area of operations through isolation. Isolation is defined as a tactical task to seal off (both physically and psychologically) an enemy from his sources of support, to deny an enemy freedom of movement, and prevent an enemy unit from having contact with other enemy forces. During isolation, the brigade commander sets the conditions for tactical success. Implied in this step are the thorough reconnaissance of the objectives and movement of subordinate units to positions of tactical advantage. The brigade commander must carefully determine the extent and the manner in which his forces can isolate the objectives. The factors of METT-TC determine how the brigade will isolate the objective psychologically and physically. Only areas essential to mission success are isolated.

a. **Psychological Isolation of the Objective.** Isolation begins with the efforts of the division and corps psychological and civil affairs operations to influence enemy and civilian actions. The brigade commander should consider using PSYOP teams to broadcast appropriate messages to the threat and to deliver leaflets directing the civilian population to move to a designated safe area. These actions must be coordinated with the overall PSYOP plan for the theater and must not sacrifice surprise. By themselves, PSYOP are seldom decisive. They take time to become effective and often their effects are difficult to measure until after the actual attack, but they have usually proven to be successful. Under some METT-TC conditions, they have achieved results far outweighing the effort put into them.

b. **Sensors and Reconnaissance Units.** One of the more common methods of isolation involves the use of a combination of sensors and reconnaissance units along avenues of approach to detect enemy forces as they attempt to enter or leave the objective area. The brigade can engage these enemy forces with indirect fires, aerial fires, or a combination of the two, consistent with the ROE. This technique may be effective in detecting and stopping large enemy units from entering or leaving, but the cover and concealment the urban area provides make it difficult to totally seal off the urban objective. To be successful, this technique requires skillful reconnaissance units and responsive fires. It may not be possible for the brigade to observe all avenues of approach, and enemy units may escape detection by infiltrating or exfiltrating. It may be difficult to distinguish between enemy and friendly personnel and noncombatants moving in and out of the urban area. Indirect fires may cause unacceptable damage to key parts of the urban area.

c. **Snipers.** In certain situations that require precise fire, snipers can provide an excellent method of assisting in isolating key areas. Skillful application of snipers can provide lethal fire while simultaneously minimizing collateral damage and noncombatant casualties. Snipers can also be used to observe and report enemy activity and to call for and adjust indirect fire.

d. **Combination of Assets.** The most effective method of isolating an urban objective is probably the use of a combination of sensors, reconnaissance elements, and maneuver forces. The brigade can move platoons and companies into positions where they can dominate avenues of approach with observation and direct fires. Smaller urban

areas with clearly defined boundaries make this method easier to accomplish. Larger urban areas may prevent a maneuver force from gaining access to a position from which to stop enemy movement into the objective area.

e. **Use of Fires and Smoke.** In some instances, where the ROE permit, indirect and aerial fires may be the only available or appropriate method of isolation. This technique is the most destructive; it demands large amounts of ammunition, and it may only last for short periods of time. Brigade fire planners can improve the effectiveness of this technique by careful selection of high pay-off targets and use of precision munitions. Mortar and light artillery fires falling onto large buildings are not as effective in preventing enemy movement as fires falling into open areas. Targeting them against larger avenues, parks, and other open areas force the enemy to move within buildings. Artillery and aerial fires can be directed against buildings that the enemy is using for movement and observation. This method slows and impedes enemy movement, but not stop it. It can also hinder enemy supply efforts and make it difficult to reinforce units under attack. Targeting obvious choke points, such as bridges or main road junctions, can also assist in the isolation effort. Smoke can be used to isolate the objective from enemy observation, but it is difficult to predict what smoke does in an urban area.

**NOTE:** Multiple flat polished surfaces in an urban area may degrade laser use, thereby rendering some weapon systems useless. Close coordination must occur between maneuver and fire support planners in order to obtain the desired effects of laser-guided precision munitions. Also, obscuration rounds may cause uncontrolled fires in the city and must be carefully planned.

#### **4-23. DOMINATE**

The brigade uses all combined arms available, consistent with the ROE, to defeat or destroy the enemy at decisive points and achieve the desired end-state of the mission. The brigade seeks to dominate the enemy through well-planned isolation and skillful use of combined arms. The brigade commander seeks to minimize the amount of street to street and house to house fighting that must be performed by battalions.

#### **4-24. TYPES OF OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS**

The brigade conducts the same types of offensive operations as it would on open terrain. (See FMs 7-30 and 71-3.) Techniques that may be more applicable during urban offensive operations are discussed in the following paragraphs. These techniques are applicable to all forms of offensive maneuver and would be determined by METT-TC factors.

a. **Movement to Contact, Search and Attack Technique.** Figure 4-10, page 4-22, depicts a brigade conducting a movement to contact in an urban area using the search and attack technique. This technique is used when knowledge of the enemy is unclear and contact is required. It is normally employed against a weak enemy force that is disorganized and incapable of massing strength against task forces (for example, urban insurgents or gangs). The brigade divides the AO into smaller areas and coordinates the movement of battalions through the brigade AO. In the example shown in Figure 4-10, the enemy is found and fixed during isolation and finished during domination. During a mission of this type, the urban environment makes it difficult for conventional Infantry

forces to find, fix, and finish the enemy. For example, movement of units may become canalized due to streets and urban *canyons* created by tall buildings. The application of firepower may become highly restricted based on the ROE. The use of HUMINT in this type of action becomes increasingly more important and can be of great assistance during the *find* portion of the mission. (Table 4-1 shows the advantages and disadvantages of search and attack.)

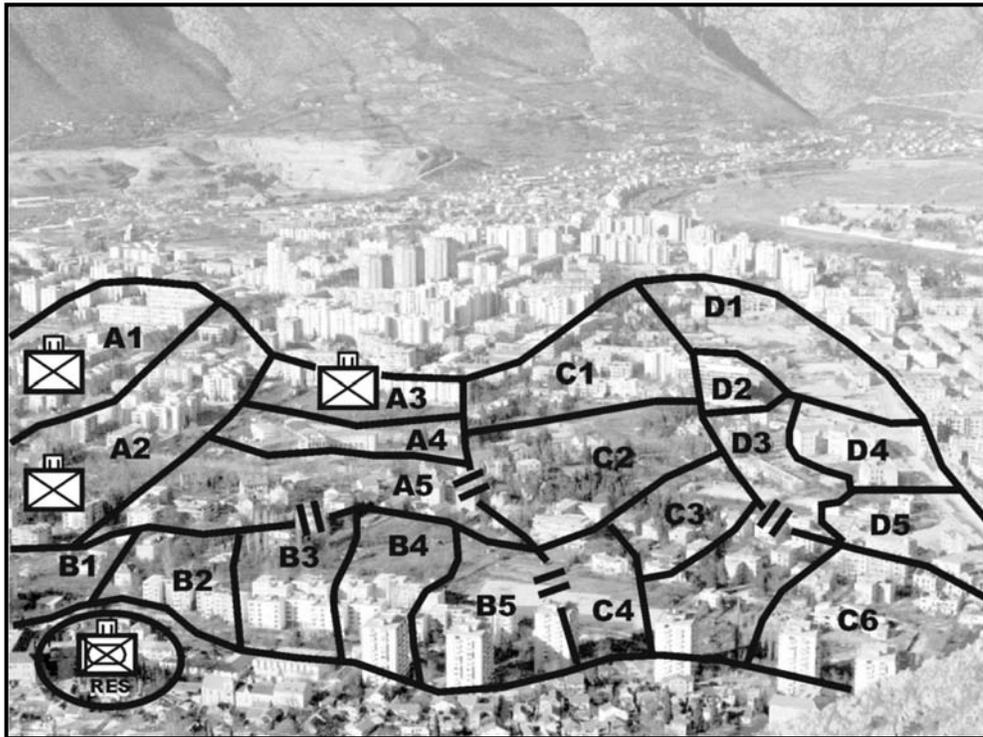


Figure 4-10. Search and attack technique.

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Search and Attack</i>	Requires enemy to fight in multiple directions.  Increases maneuver space and flexibility.	Difficult to command and control.  Difficult to provide CS and CSS.  Difficult to provide for mutual support of maneuver forces.  Find/fix/finish forces are challenged/limited.

Table 4-1. Advantages and disadvantages of search and attack.

b. **Attack on a Single Axis.** If the brigade must mass combat power in order to conduct a deliberate attack against an enemy strongpoint, an attack on a single axis may be considered. This technique would be used when the axis of advance is not well defended by the enemy. Figure 4-11 depicts a brigade conducting an attack on a single axis on OBJ GOLD. In the example shown, the lead task force (TF) has the mission of conducting a supporting attack to seize OBJ 22 and facilitate passage of the second the TF through OBJ 22. The second TF conducts the main attack to seize and clear OBJ 21 with an on order mission to seize OBJ 23. A third TF follows in reserve. In the example shown below, the brigade would normally receive assistance in isolating the objective. (Table 4-2 shows the advantages and disadvantages of an attack on a single axis.)

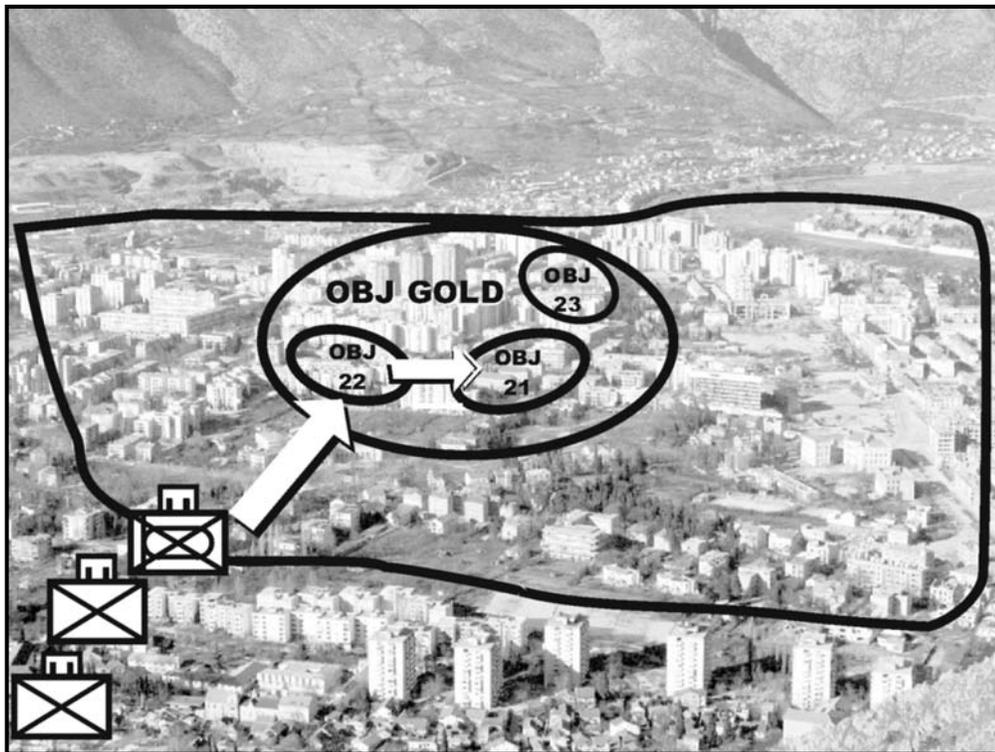


Figure 4-11. Attack on a single axis.

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Attack on a Single Axis</i>	Facilitates command and control.  Limited combat power to the front.  Concentrates combat power at a critical point.	Limits maneuver.  Presents denser target to the enemy.  Presents a single threat to the enemy.  Reduces flexibility.

Table 4-2. Advantages and disadvantages of an attack on a single axis.

c. **Attack on Multiple Axes.** If enemy defenses are more robust and the brigade commander wishes to force the enemy to fight in multiple directions, an attack on multiple axes can be considered.

(1) Figure 4-12 depicts a brigade conducting the same attack on OBJ GOLD using multiple axes. In this case, a battalion TF (air assault) conducts an air assault on OBJ C and then conducts a supporting attack to seize OBJ D. A second TF conducts a supporting attack to seize OBJ B, with a third conducting the main attack to seize and clear OBJ A. The supporting attacks isolate OBJ A. (Table 4-3 shows the advantages and disadvantages of an attack on multiple axes.) Synchronization of BOS is crucial to ensure the massing of effects at the critical points and to prevent the isolation and piecemeal destruction of smaller elements separated by the structures in the urban area.

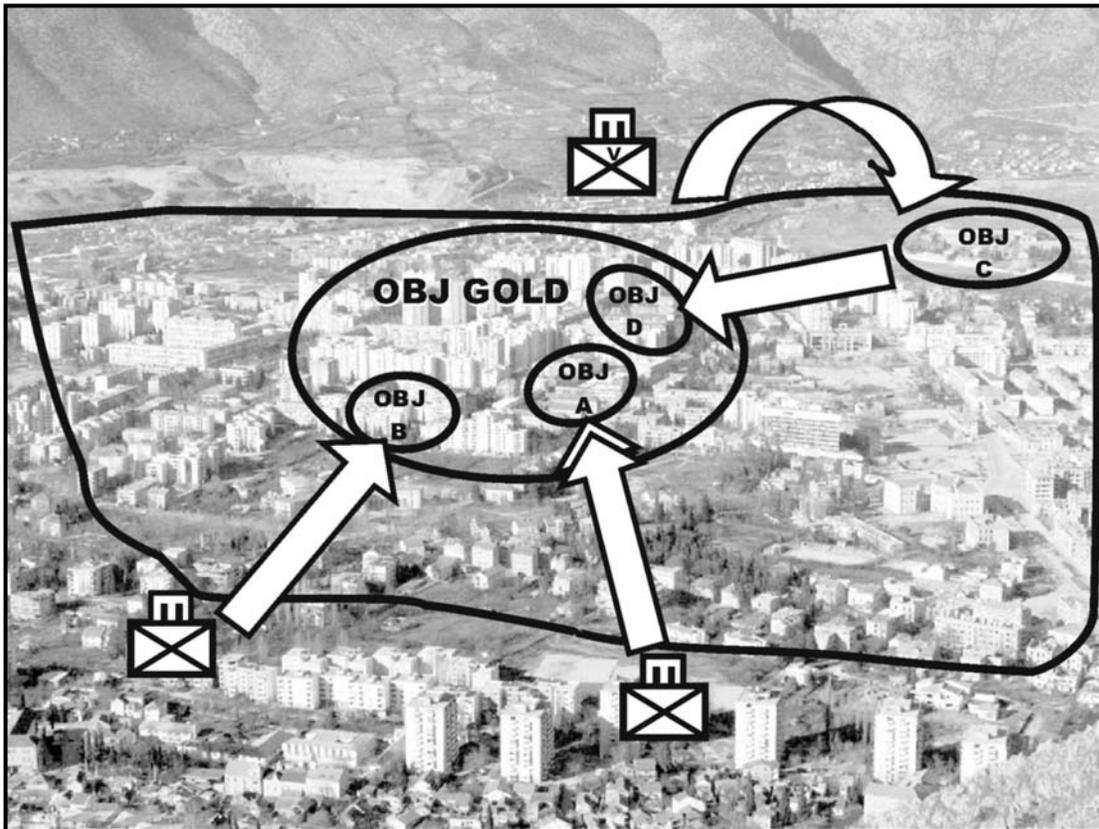
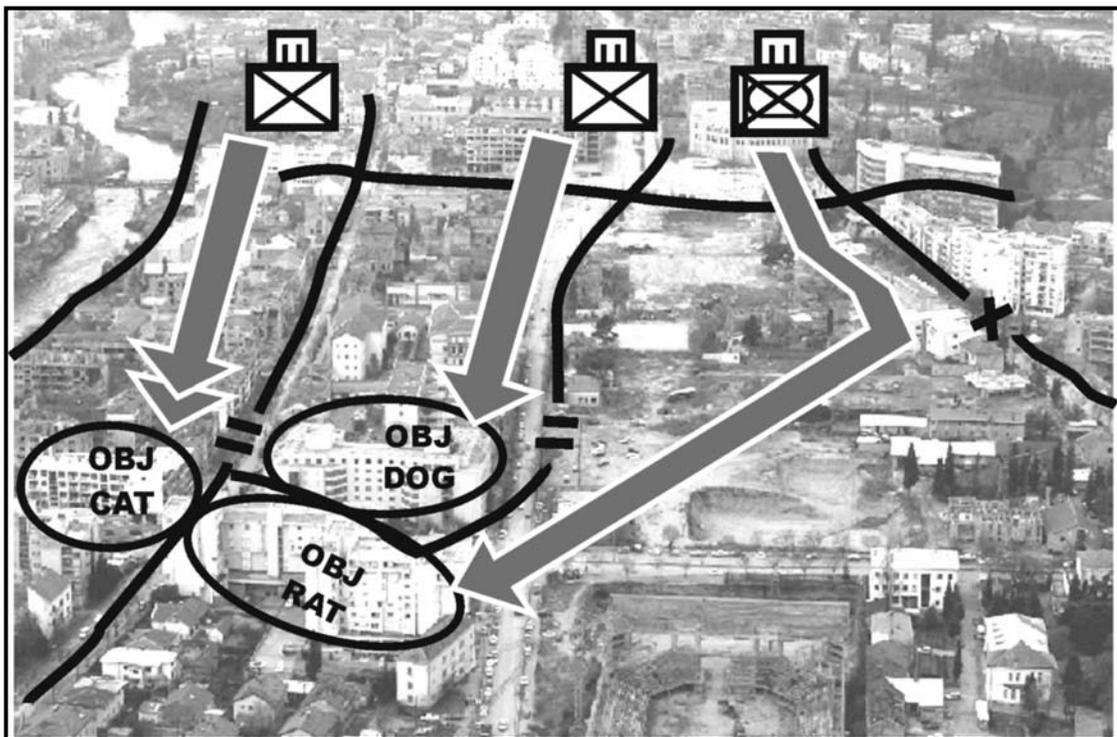


Figure 4-12. Attack on multiple axes.

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Attack on Multiple Axes</i>	<p>Better distributes combat power.</p> <p>Requires the enemy to fight in multiple directions.</p> <p>Increases maneuver space and flexibility.</p>	<p>More difficult to command and control.</p> <p>More difficult to provide CS and CSS.</p>

**Table 4-3. Advantages and disadvantages of an attack on multiple axes.**

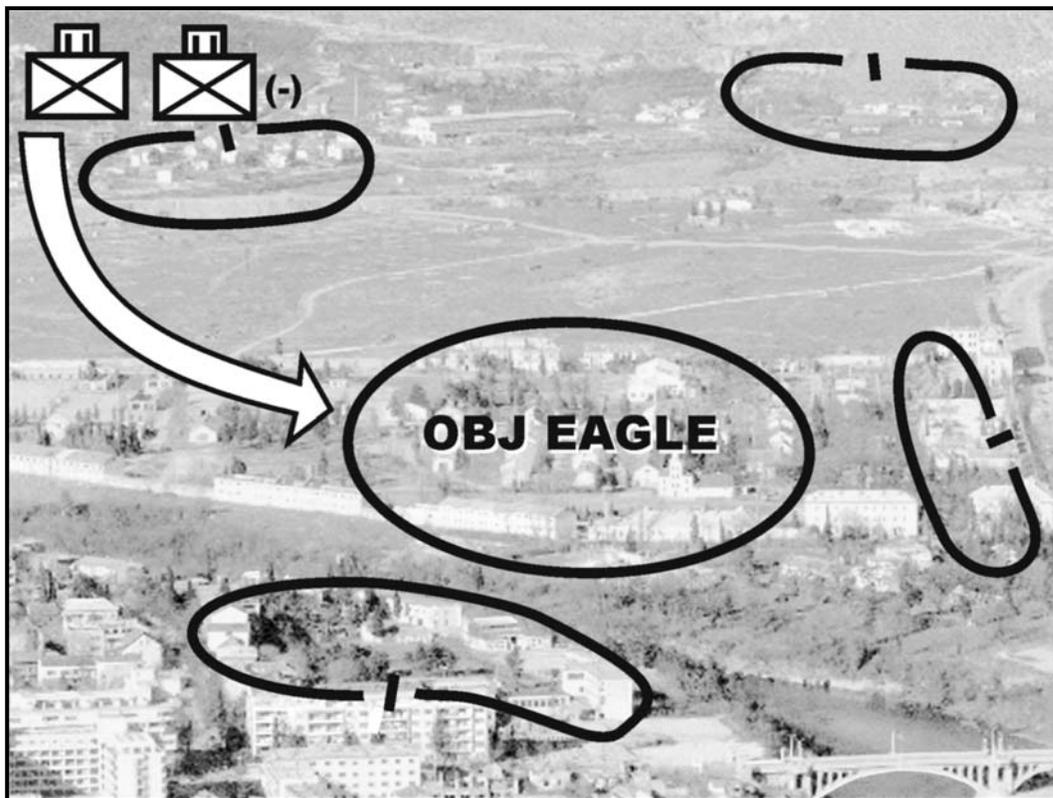
(2) Figure 4-13 depicts an attack on multiple axes on different terrain. In this situation the brigade has the mission to seize OBJ ZULU (OBJs DOG, RAT, and CAT). The brigade commander has decided to attack on multiple axes with two battalion task forces conducting supporting attacks to seize OBJs DOG and RAT in order to isolate OBJ CAT. The brigade main attack seizes and clears OBJ CAT.



**Figure 4-13. Attack on multiple axes, different terrain.**

d. **Cordon and Attack.** The brigade may find itself in a position where it may physically isolate a large portion of an urban objective. The brigade commander may also determine that he can force the enemy out of his positions and out into more open areas

where he can be engaged by direct and indirect fires. In this case, the cordon and attack technique may be considered. A cordon is a type of isolation. Cordon is a tactical task given to a unit to prevent withdrawal from or reinforcement of a position. Cordon implies seizing or controlling key terrain and or mounted and dismounted avenues of approach. Figure 4-14 depicts a brigade attacking to seize and clear OBJ EAGLE using the cordon and attack technique. One task force (four company teams) cordons OBJ EAGLE by occupying battle positions. (A cordon may also be accomplished using ambushes, roadblocks, checkpoints, OPs, and patrols.) The example in Figure 4-14 shows one TF seizing and clearing OBJ EAGLE and another as the brigade reserve. Skillful application of fires and other combat multipliers may also defeat the enemy when this technique is used and minimize or preclude close combat. (Table 4-4 lists the advantages and disadvantages of cordon and attack.



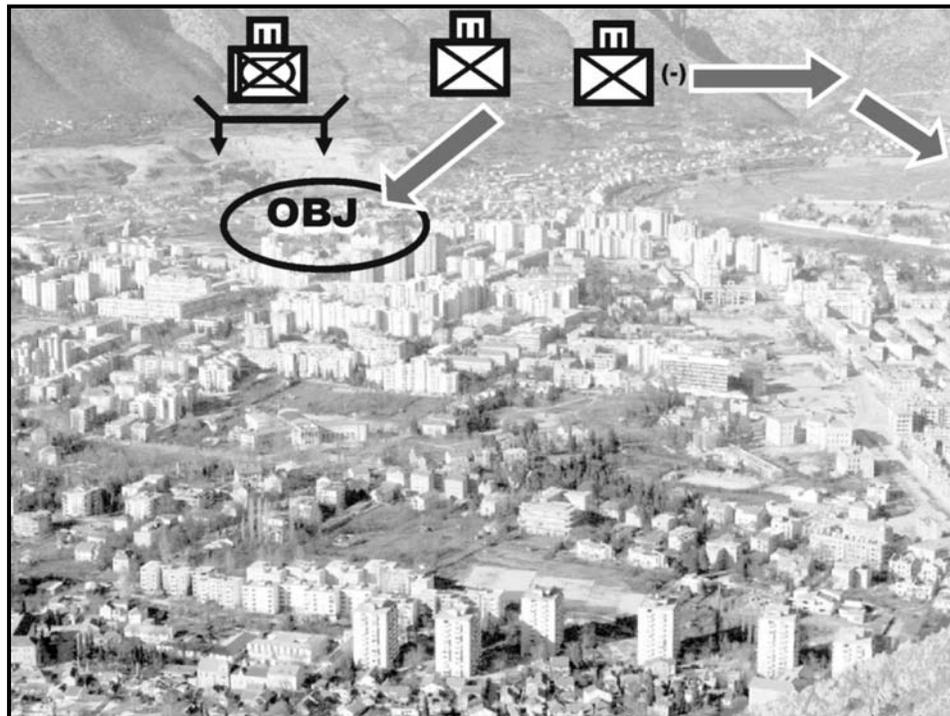
**Figure 4-14. Cordon and attack.**

**NOTE:** In the example shown in Figure 4-14, the battle positions are oriented to place fires on the enemy leaving OBJ EAGLE and to prevent his withdrawal from the objective area. The factors of METT-TC determine how the battle positions are oriented and what the mission end-state will be. Additional direct fire control measures, such as TRPs and engagement areas, as well as indirect fire control measures can focus fires and assist in canalizing the enemy into desired areas.

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Cordon and Attack</i>	<p>Concentrates combat power.</p> <p>Provides mutual support of maneuver forces.</p>	<p>Sequencing the cordon can be difficult.</p> <p>Considerable combat power can be committed to the cordon.</p>

**Table 4-4. Advantages and disadvantages of cordon and attack.**

e. **Fix and Bypass.** A brigade may find itself in a position where it is conducting operations near an urban area that needs to be bypassed. In certain situations the enemy may have to be fixed prior to the brigade’s bypassing the urban area. Figure 4-15 depicts a brigade conducting a limited offensive action to fix the enemy with a small force and bypass the urban area with the bulk of the brigade’s combat power. If entering the urban area is unavoidable or force protection requirements force the brigade to attack the urban area, the fix and bypass technique may be considered. (Table 4-5 on page 4-28 lists the advantages and disadvantages of fix and bypass.) It is preferable to completely avoid the urban area if it is eventually bypassed. During the planning process, routes are chosen so that close combat in the urban area can be avoided. Also, the brigade may be able to fix the enemy with fires and avoid having to enter the urban area.

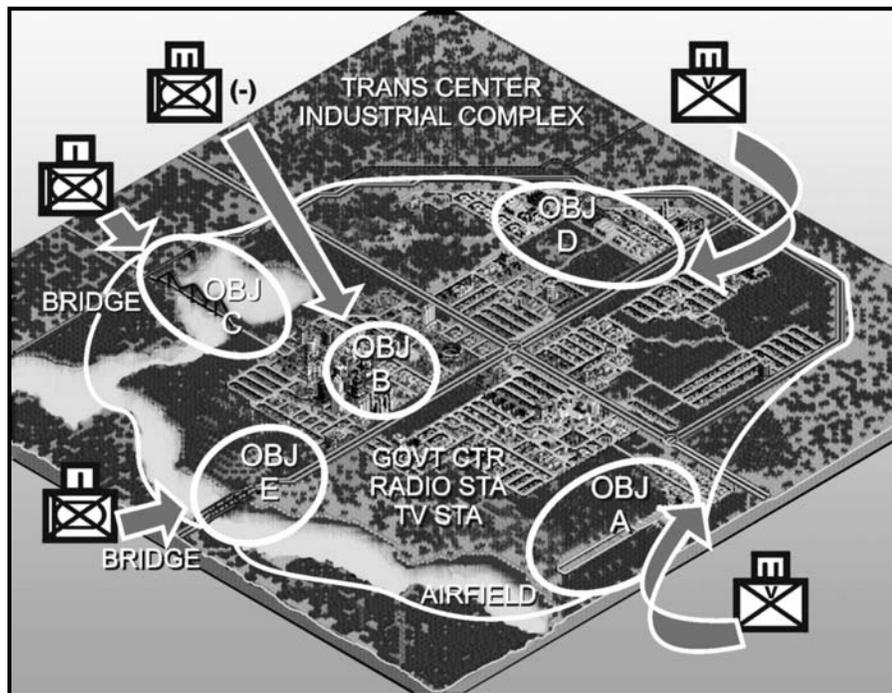


**Figure 4-15. Fix and bypass.**

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Fix and Bypass</i>	Avoids urban area.  Facilitates freedom of action.	Requires the brigade to separate, commit, and support part of its force.  Fixing force may become isolated and cut off.

**Table 4-5. Advantages and disadvantages of fix and bypass.**

f. **Multiple Nodal Attacks.** The brigade may be given the mission to attack multiple nodes either simultaneously or sequentially. This mission is characterized by rapid attacks followed by defensive operations. The enemy situation must permit the brigade to divide its forces and seize key nodes. Multiple attacks such as this require precise maneuver and supporting fires. This mission may be given to a brigade before an anticipated stability operation, or to isolate an urban area for other units that are going to conduct offensive operations inside the urban area. Figure 4-16 depicts a brigade conducting multiple nodal attacks. This technique is used to deny the enemy the use of key infrastructure. Use of this technique may also require designated rapid response elements in reserve in the event that enemy forces mass and quickly overwhelm an attacking battalion. The duration of this attack should not exceed the brigade’s self-sustainment capability. (Table 4-6 lists the advantages and disadvantages of multiple nodal attacks.)



**Figure 4-16. Multiple nodal attacks.**

TECHNIQUE	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<i>Multiple Nodal Attacks</i>	<p>Presents multiple threats to the enemy.</p> <p>Increases maneuver space and flexibility.</p>	<p>Difficult to command and control.</p> <p>Difficult to provide CS and CSS.</p> <p>Difficult to provide for mutual support of maneuver forces.</p> <p>Difficult to sequence.</p>

**Table 4-6. Advantages and disadvantages of multiple nodal attacks.**

**4-25. TRANSITION**

During transition, the brigade continues to use all CS and CSS assets consistent with the mission end-state and ROE to move from offensive operations to stability and or support operations in order to return the urban area back to civilian control. During this step, the roles and use of SOF, CSS, and CS units, such as civil affairs (CA), PSYOP, medical, and MPs become more important with the requirements to maintain order and stabilize the urban area. Subordinate task forces and other brigade units consolidate, reorganize, conduct area protection and logistical missions, and prepare for follow-on missions. The brigade staff prepares to transition from being a *supported* force to being the *supporting* force. (See Chapter 14, Stability and Support Operations.)

**Section VI. BATTALION TASK FORCE OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS**

*The battalion plan of action was as follows: one platoon of Company “F,” with a light machine gun section, would stage the initial diversionary attack. It would be supported by two tanks and two tank destroyers, who were instructed to shoot at all or any suspected targets. Observation posts had been manned on a slag pile to support the advance with 81-mm mortar fire...The platoon action was to be the first step...to reduce the town of Aachen.*

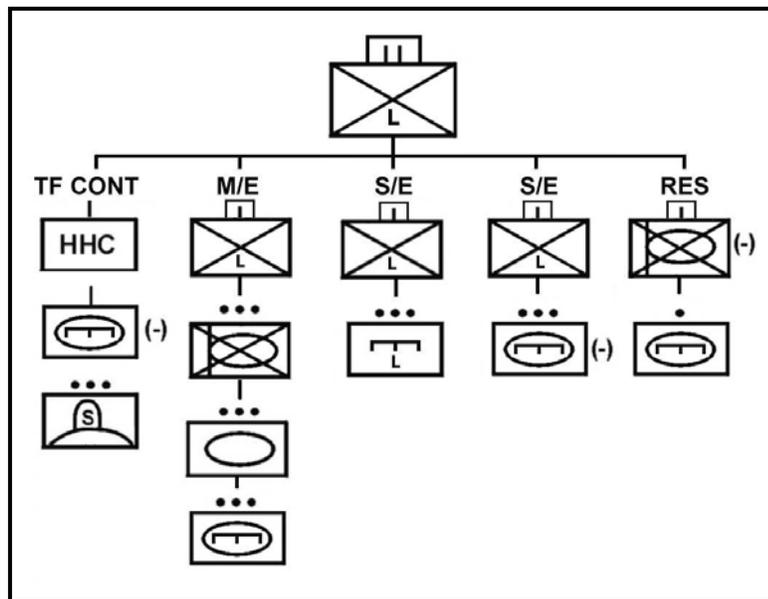
*...the remainder of our zone of action...would be cleared by Companies "F" and "G," who would execute a flanking attack, jumping off abreast of each other through the area secured by the Company "F" platoon...Preparatory fire by medium artillery was to be planned...Mortar observers would accompany each company...Tanks and tank destroyers were assigned to each company...*

LTC Darrel M. Daniel  
 Commander, 2nd Bn, 26th In Rgt  
 October, 1944, Battle of Aachen

This section discusses tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and considerations that battalion task forces can employ to conduct independent UO or to conduct operations as part of larger brigade UO. The TTP described in this section can apply to all types of battalion task forces, with modifications made for the assets available.

**4-26. TASK ORGANIZATION**

As with brigade UO, battalion task forces (TF) may require unique task organizations. For example, UO provide one of the few situations where Infantry and armor elements may be effectively task-organized below platoon levels. Battalion commanders must consider providing assets where they are needed to accomplish specific tasks. All phases of mission execution must be considered when developing task organization. Changes in task organization may be required to accomplish different tasks during mission execution. Figure 4-17 depicts a sample task organization for a light Infantry TF conducting an offensive UO that consists of a main effort, two supporting efforts, and a reserve.



**Figure 4-17. Sample offensive task organization.**

**NOTE:** The task organization shown may change after the assault when the TF reorganizes for follow-on missions.

#### 4-27. DELIBERATE ATTACK

Because companies or company teams may become isolated during the attack, the TF commander should attach some support elements to ensure the success of his plan. Armored vehicles (tanks, BFVs, self-propelled artillery) attached to light units must have their own logistics packages. Tanks and BFVs can be used to clear or isolate hardened targets protected by buildings or rubble. Engineers can neutralize obstacles hindering the attack. The TF commander plans to conduct a deliberate attack by performing the following actions.

a. **Reconnoiter the Objective.** This method involves making a physical reconnaissance of the objective with battalion assets and those of higher headquarters, as the tactical situation permits. It also involves making a map reconnaissance of the objective and all the terrain that affects the mission, as well as the analysis of aerial imagery, photographs, or any other detailed information about the buildings or other urban terrain the battalion is responsible for. Additionally, any human intelligence (HUMINT) collected by reconnaissance and surveillance units, such as the battalion reconnaissance platoon, snipers, and so forth, should be considered during the planning process.

b. **Move to the Objective.** This method may involve moving through open and or urban terrain. Movement should be made as rapidly as possible without sacrificing security. Movement should be made along covered and concealed routes and can involve moving through buildings, down streets, in subsurface areas, or a combination of all three. Urban movement must take into account the three-dimensional aspect of the urban area.

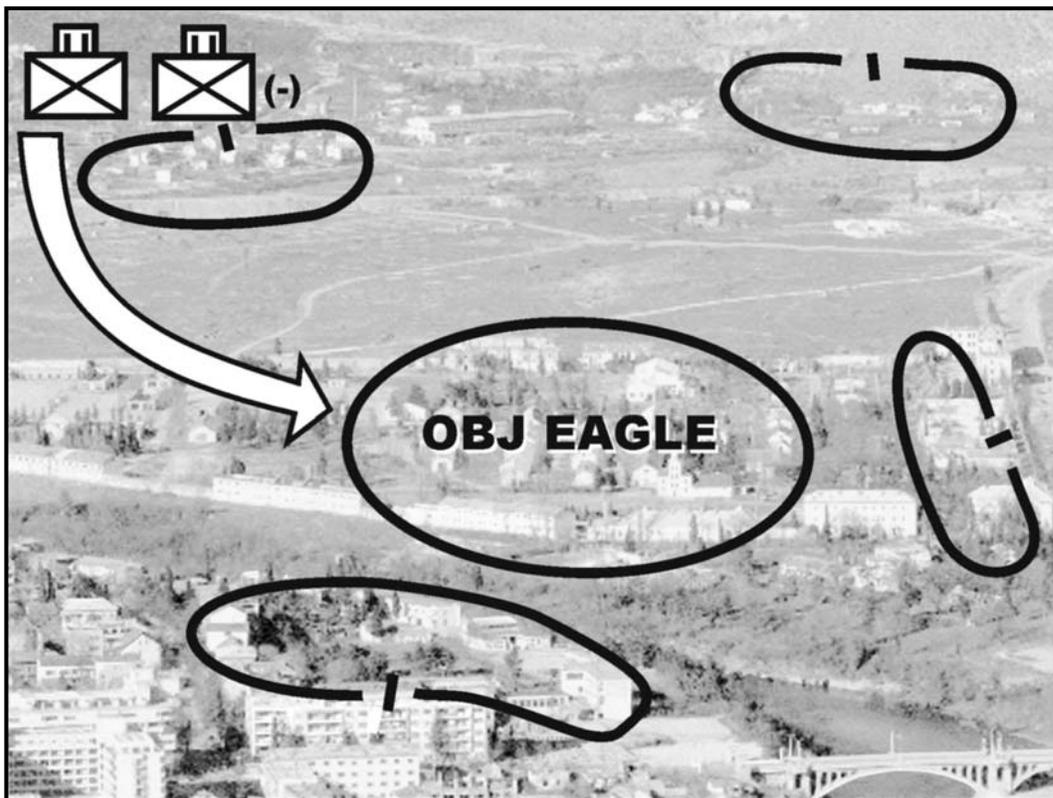
c. **Isolate the Objective.** Isolation begins with the efforts of SOF units controlled by higher headquarters to influence enemy and civilian actions. The battalion commander should consider using PSYOP teams to broadcast appropriate messages to the threat and to deliver leaflets directing the civilian population to move to a designated safe area, if the units are available to support the battalion. These actions must be coordinated with the overall PSYOP plan for the brigade and must not sacrifice surprise. By themselves, PSYOP are seldom decisive. They take time to become effective and often their effects are difficult to measure until after the actual attack. Under some METT-TC conditions, PSYOP have achieved results far outweighing the effort put into them.

(1) In certain situations that require precise fire, snipers can provide an excellent method of isolating key areas. Skillful application of snipers can provide lethal fire while simultaneously minimizing collateral damage and noncombatant casualties.

(2) Isolating the objective also involves seizing terrain that dominates the area so that the enemy cannot supply, reinforce, or withdraw its defenders. It also includes selecting terrain that provides the ability to place suppressive fire on the objective. (This step may be taken at the same time as securing a foothold.) If isolating the objective is the first step, speed is necessary so that the defender has no time to react. Battalions may be required to isolate an objective as part of brigade operations, or may be required to do so independently (Figure 4-18, page 4-32). Depending on the tactical situation, companies within the battalion may isolate an objective by infiltration and stealth.

(3) Cordon is a tactical task given to a unit to prevent withdrawal from or reinforcement of a position. A cordon is a type of isolation. It implies seizing or

controlling key terrain and or mounted and dismounted avenues of approach. Figure 4-18 depicts a brigade attacking to seize and clear OBJ EAGLE using the cordon and attack technique. One battalion TF (four company teams) cordons (isolates) OBJ EAGLE by occupying battle positions. (A cordon may also be accomplished through use of ambushes, roadblocks, checkpoints, OPs, and patrols.) Skillful application of fires and other combat multipliers may also defeat the enemy when this technique is used and minimize or preclude close combat. In the example shown in Figure 4-18, the battle positions are oriented to place fires on the enemy leaving OBJ EAGLE and to prevent his withdrawal from the objective area. The factors of METT-TC determine how the battle positions are oriented and what the mission end-state will be. Additional direct fire control measures, such as TRPs and engagement areas, as well as indirect fire control measures, can focus fires and assist in canalizing the enemy into desired areas.



**Figure 4-18. Isolation of an urban area by an Infantry battalion using the cordon technique.**

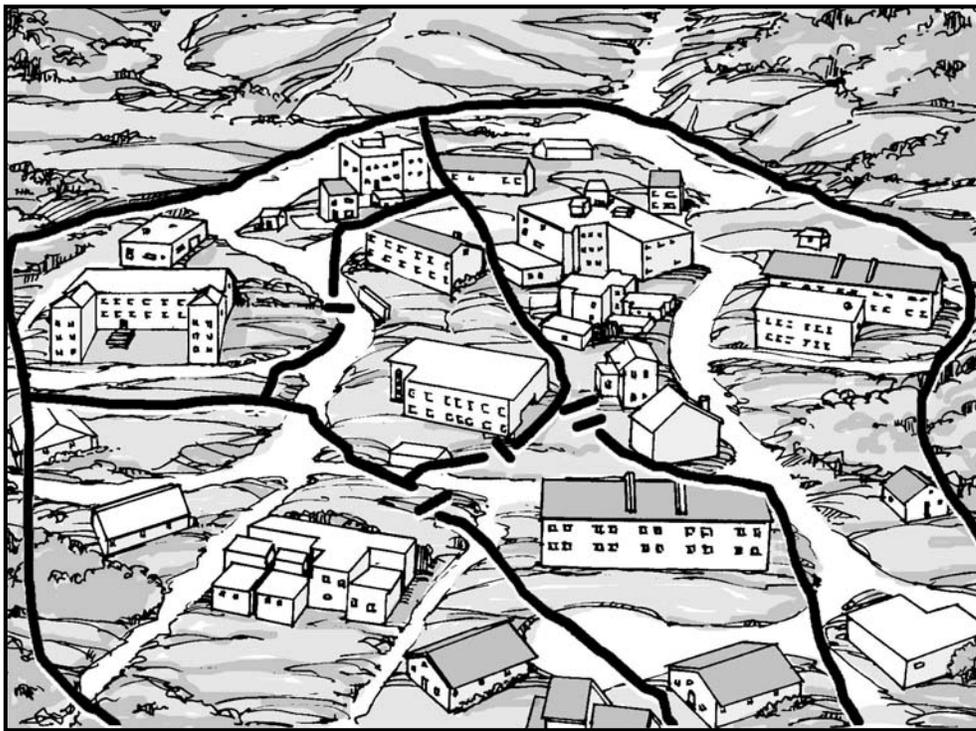
**NOTE:** Combat experience and recent rotations at the CTCs have shown that many casualties can be sustained when moving between buildings, down streets, and through open areas to enter a building either to gain a foothold or to clear it. One purpose of isolation at the company and battalion levels must be to dominate the area leading to the points of entry to protect assaulting troops entering the building from effective enemy fire. This technique is



and rooms. The commander may decide to clear only those parts necessary for the success of his mission if—

- An objective must be seized quickly.
- Enemy resistance is light or fragmented.
- The buildings in the area have large open areas between them. In this case, the commander would clear only those buildings along the approach to his objective, or only those buildings necessary for security.

An Infantry battalion may have a mission to systematically clear an area of all enemy. Through detailed analysis, the commander may anticipate that he will be opposed by strong, organized resistance or will be in areas having strongly constructed buildings close together. Companies may be assigned their own AO within the battalion sector in order to conduct systematic clearing (Figure 4-20).



**Figure 4-20. Systematic clearance within assigned areas.**

f. **Consolidate/Reorganize and Prepare for Future Missions.** Consolidation occurs immediately after each action. Reorganization and preparation for future missions occurs after consolidation. Many of these actions occur simultaneously.

(1) Consolidation provides security and facilitates reorganization, and allows the battalion to prepare for counterattack. Rapid consolidation after an engagement is extremely important in an urban environment. The assault force in a cleared building must be quick to consolidate in order to repel enemy counterattacks and to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into the cleared building. After securing a floor, selected members of the assault force are assigned to cover potential enemy counterattack routes to the building. Priority must be given to securing the direction of attack first.

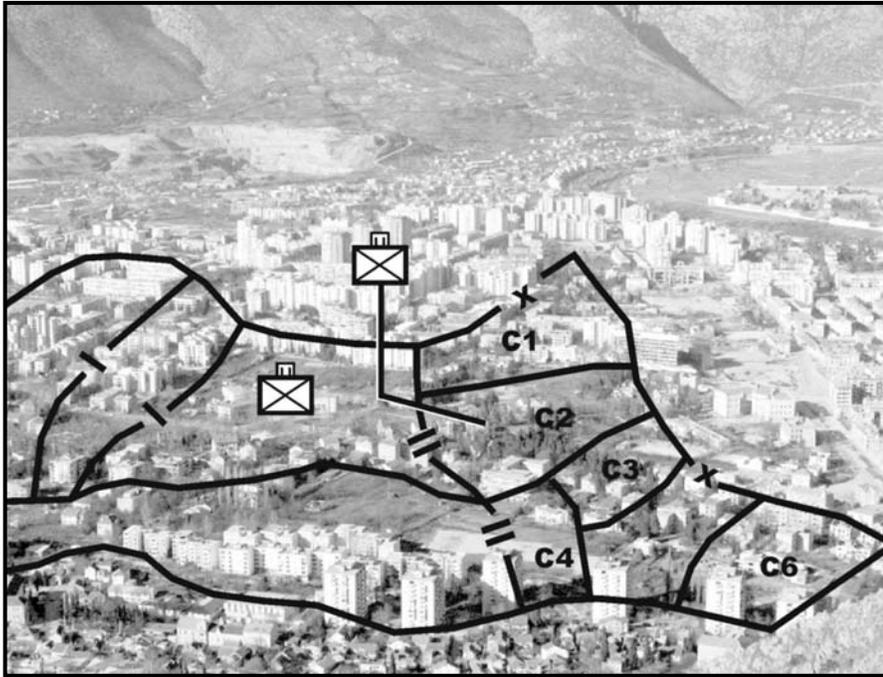
(2) Reorganization actions (many occurring simultaneously) prepare the unit to continue the mission. The battalion prepares to continue the attack, prepares for future missions, and prepares for the possible transition to stability and support operations.

**NOTE:** Friendly force situational awareness is significantly improved in digitally equipped units through the use of Force XXI Battalion Command Brigade and Below (FBCB2) assets.

g. **Transition.** During transition, the battalion continues to use all CS and CSS assets consistent with the mission end-state and ROE to move from offensive operations to stability and or support operations in order to return the urban area to civilian control. During this step, the roles and use of SOF, CS, and CSS units, such as civil affairs (CA), PSYOP, medical, and MPs, become more important with the requirements to maintain order and stabilize the urban area. These assets normally support the battalion's transition efforts under brigade control. The battalion and other brigade units consolidate, reorganize, conduct area protection and logistical missions, and prepare for follow-on missions. The battalion staff, in coordination with the brigade staff, must prepare to transition from being a *supported* force to being the *supporting* force.

#### **4-28. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT**

Figure 4-21 on page 4-36 depicts a movement to contact in an urban area using the search and attack technique. This technique is used when knowledge of the enemy is unclear and contact is required. It is normally employed against a weak enemy force that is disorganized and incapable of massing strength against the battalion; for example, urban insurgents or gangs. The battalion divides its portion of the AO into smaller areas and coordinates the movement of companies. The battalion can either assign sectors to specific companies or control movement of companies by sequential or alternate bounds within the battalion sector. In the example shown in Figure 4-21 on page 4-36, individual companies would find, fix, and finish the enemy (company sectors), or they would find and fix the enemy and the battalion would assign another company the task of finishing the enemy (sequential or alternate bounds). During a mission of this type, the urban environment makes finding, fixing, and finishing the enemy difficult for conventional Infantry forces. For example, movement of units may become canalized due to streets and urban *canyons* created by tall buildings. The application of firepower may become highly restricted based on the ROE. The use of HUMINT in this type of action becomes increasingly more important and can be of great assistance during the *find* portion of the mission.



**Figure 4-21. Search and attack technique.**

#### 4-29. INFILTRATION

The following example describes the actions of an Infantry battalion conducting an infiltration. With some modification, it could also apply to a dismounted mechanized Infantry battalion.

a. The outskirts of an urban area may not be strongly defended. Its defenders may have only a series of antiarmor positions, security elements on the principal approach, or positions blocking the approaches to key features in the town. The strongpoints and reserves are deeper in the urban area.

b. A battalion may be able to seize a part of the urban area by infiltrating platoons and companies between those enemy positions on the outskirts. Moving by stealth on secondary streets by using the cover and concealment of back alleys and buildings, the battalion may be able to seize key street junctions or terrain features, to isolate enemy positions, and to help following units pass into the urban area. Such an infiltration should be performed when visibility is poor and no civilians are in the area. Bypassing enemy strongpoints may result in flank and rear security problems for the infiltrating battalion. Bypassed units may become a counterattack force or cut lines of communications, if not isolated. Planning should include securing all mounted and dismounted avenues of approach from the bypassed enemy strongpoints to ensure their isolation.

c. The Infantry battalion is organized into infiltration companies with appropriate attachments and a reserve consistent with METT-TC. Each company should have an infiltration lane that allows stealthy infiltration by company or smaller size units. Depending on the construction of the urban area and streets, the infiltration lane may be 500 to 1,500 meters wide.

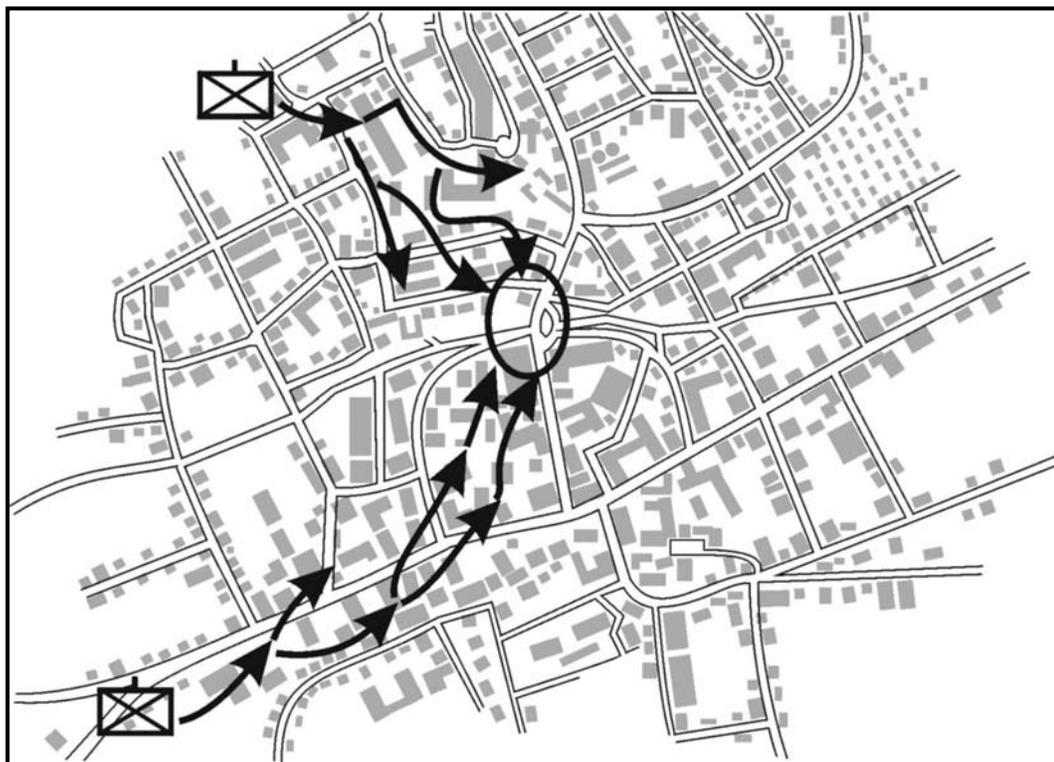
d. The infiltrating companies advance stealthily on foot using available cover and concealment. Mortar and artillery fire can be used to divert the enemy's attention and cover the sound of infiltrating troops.

e. Armored vehicles and antiarmor weapons are positioned to cover likely avenues of approach for enemy armored vehicles. The battalion commander may position antiarmor weapons to cover the likely avenues of approach, if no BFVs or tanks are available. The reconnaissance platoon and antiarmor company screen the battalion's more vulnerable flanks. Also, the antiarmor company can support by fire if the situation provides adequate support by fire positions.

f. As the companies move into the urban area, they secure their own flanks. Security elements may be dropped off along the route to warn of a flank attack. Engineers assist in breaching or bypassing minefields or obstacles encountered. Enemy positions are avoided but reported.

g. The infiltrating companies proceed until they reach their objective. At that time, they consolidate and reorganize and arrange for mutual support. They patrol to their front and flanks, and establish contact with each other. The company commander may establish a limit of advance to reduce chances of enemy contact or to ensure safety from friendly forces.

h. If the infiltration places the enemy in an untenable position and he must withdraw, the rest of the battalion is brought forward for the next phase of the operation. If the enemy does not withdraw, the battalion must clear the urban area before the next phase of the operation (Figure 4-22).



**Figure 4-22. Infiltration.**

#### 4-30. ATTACK OF A VILLAGE

The battalion may have to conduct either a hasty or deliberate attack of a village that is partially or completely surrounded by open terrain. (Figure 4-23 depicts a TF conducting such an attack.) After the factors of METT-TC have been considered, the tactical tasks discussed in paragraph 4-27 are performed (specifically, reconnoiter the objective, move to the objective, isolate the objective, secure a foothold, clear the objective, and consolidate and reorganize and or prepare for future missions). In the example shown in Figure 4-23, two companies and or company teams isolate the village, and a company team secures a foothold and enters and clears the village.

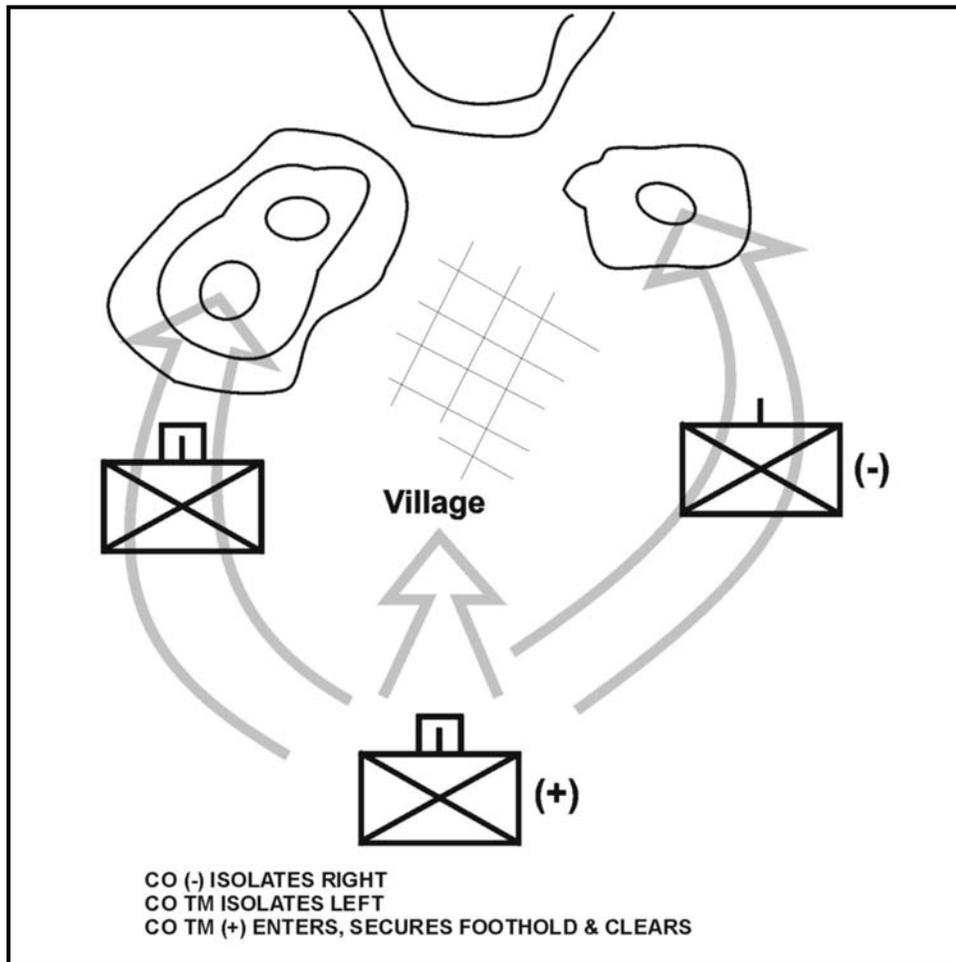


Figure 4-23. Attack of a village.

#### 4-31. ROUTE SECURITY AND CLEARANCE

An Infantry battalion may have to clear buildings to secure a route through a city. How quickly the battalion can clear the buildings depends on enemy resistance and the size and number of the buildings. The battalion deploys companies/company teams IAW with METT-TC factors. Figure 4-24 shows three companies abreast clearing routes in sector. The enemy situation must permit the battalion to deploy its subordinate units.

This mission would not normally be executed against well prepared enemy defenses in depth. In outlying areas, the forward units proceed by bounds from road junction to road junction. Other platoons provide flank security by moving down parallel streets and by probing to the flanks.

a. Depending on the required speed and enemy situation, the Infantry may either move mounted or dismounted. The platoons move down the widest streets, avoiding narrow streets. Each BFV section overwatches the squad to its front, keeping watch on the opposite side of the street. Sections provide their wingman with mutual support. Combat vehicles providing overwatch should be secured by dismounted troops. The rest of the Infantry should stay mounted to maximize speed and shock effect until required to dismount due to the enemy situation or upon reaching the objective.

b. When contact with the enemy is made, tanks support. Supporting fire fixes and isolates enemy positions which dismounted troops maneuver to attack.

c. Phase lines can be used to control the rate of advance of subordinate companies or company teams and other action. At each phase line, the forward companies might reestablish contact, reorganize, and continue clearing (Figure 4-24).

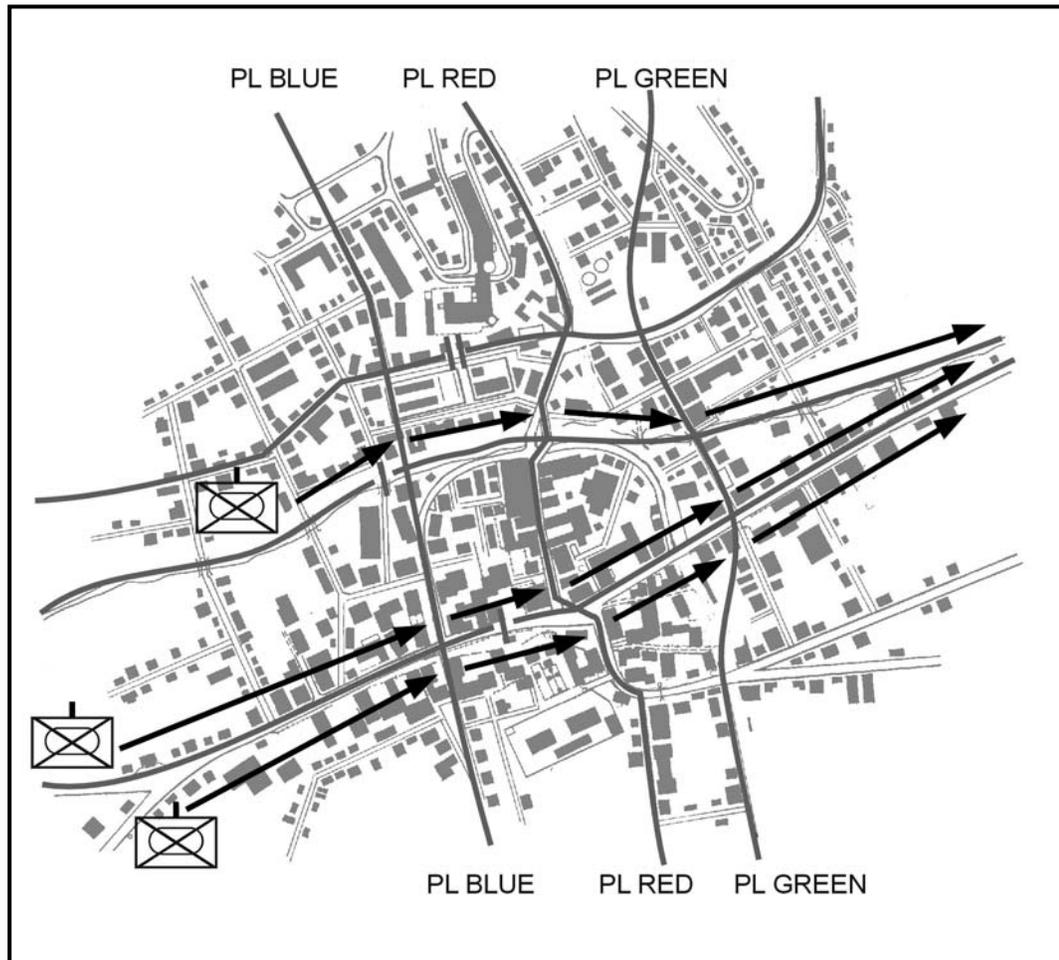


Figure 4-24. Clearing along a route.

#### 4-32. NODAL ATTACK

The battalion may be given the mission to seize key nodes as part of a brigade operation. (See Figures 4-25 and 4-26.) In certain situations, the battalion may be required to seize nodes independently. This mission is characterized by rapid attacks followed by defensive operations. The enemy situation must permit the attacking force to divide its forces and seize key nodes. Multiple attacks, as depicted in Figures 4-25 and 4-26, require precise maneuver and supporting fires. This mission may be given to a battalion before an anticipated stability and or support operation, or to isolate an urban area for other units that will be conducting offensive operations inside the urban area. Figure 4-25 depicts a brigade conducting multiple nodal attacks. Figure 4-26 depicts a battalion TF executing its assigned mission. This technique is used to deny the enemy key infrastructure. Use of this technique may also require designated rapid response elements in reserve in the event that enemy forces mass and quickly overwhelm an attacking battalion. Normally the reserve is planned at brigade level. Battalions executing a nodal attack independently needs to plan for a designated rapid response reserve element. The duration of this attack should not exceed the battalion's self-sustainment capability.

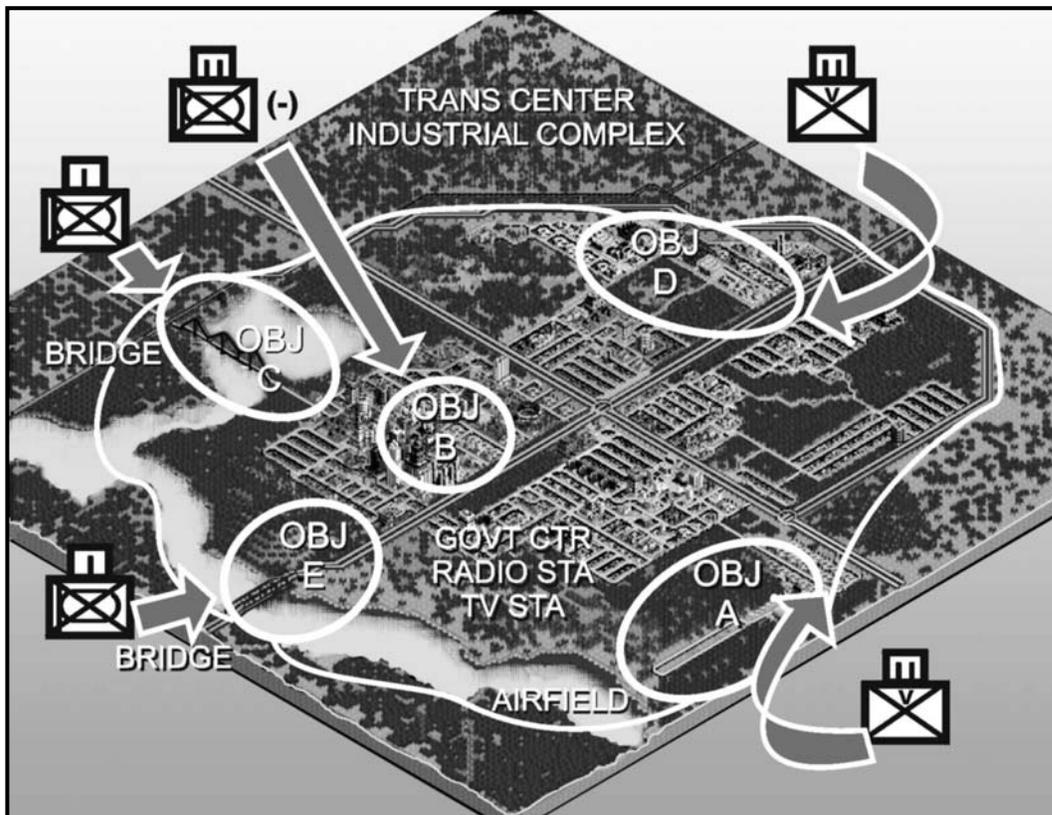
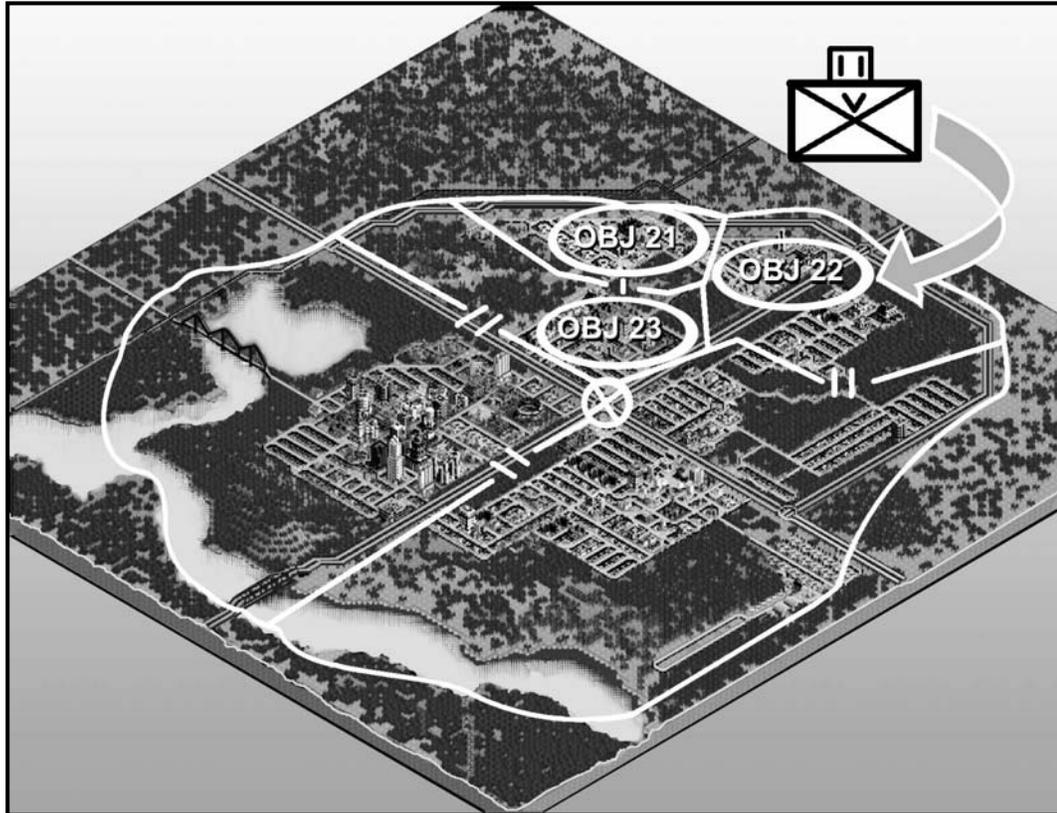


Figure 4-25. Brigade scheme of maneuver, nodal attack.



**Figure 4-26. Battalion nodal attack.**

### **Section VII. COMPANY TEAM ATTACK OF AN URBAN AREA**

*“We finally reached the front of the company where the lead APC was stopped and learned that the fire was coming from the large hotel on the left side of the street, about 50 meters to the front of the lead platoon. I guided the MK 19 HMMWV up onto a steep sidewalk so the gunner could get an effective shot and told him to watch my M16 tracer rounds and to work the building from top to bottom. I fired several tracers into the hotel; he fired a spotting round into one of the top story windows and then fired the grenade launcher on automatic, hitting every single window in the building. The effects were devastating. Concrete fragments flew everywhere, and one or two Somalis fell out of the building.”*

CPT Charles P. Ferry  
 Mogadishu, October 1993:  
 Personal Account of a Rifle Company XO  
*Infantry Magazine, Sep-Oct 94*

This section discusses tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP) and considerations that company teams can employ to conduct independent UO or to conduct operations as part

of larger battalion TF UO. The TTP described in this section can apply to all types of company teams, with modifications made for the assets available.

#### 4-33. TASK ORGANIZATION

The company commander normally task-organizes his company into two elements: an assault element and a support element. The support element may be given a number of tasks that are conducted on order or simultaneously; specifically, support by fire, isolate the objective, and conduct other support functions. The tactical situation dictates whether or not separate elements need to be task-organized in order to conduct these support missions. The mission to breach is METT-TC dependent and may be given to the assault or support element; or a separate element may be formed to conduct this task. If available, engineers are usually task-organized into the element that performs the breach. The size and composition of the elements are determined by METT-TC. If the company is part of a battalion operation, the company could be given the mission to conduct one or more of the tasks mentioned above. If conducting an urban attack independently, the company team performs both assault and support tasks.

a. **Assault Element.** The purpose of the assault element is to kill, capture, or force the withdrawal of the enemy from an urban objective. The assault element of a company team may consist of one or more platoons usually reinforced with engineers, BFVs, and possibly tanks. Building and room clearing are conducted at the platoon and squad level. The assault element must be prepared to breach to gain entry into buildings.

b. **Support Element.** The purpose of the support element is to provide any support that may be required by the assault element. The support element at company level normally consists of the company's organic assets (platoons, mortars, and antitank weapons), attachments, and units that are under the OPCON of the company commander. This assistance includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Suppressing and obscuring enemy within the objective buildings and adjacent structures.
- Isolating the objective buildings with observation and direct or indirect fires to prevent enemy withdrawal, reinforcement, or counterattack.
- Breaching walls en route to and in the objective structure.
- Destroying or suppressing enemy positions with direct fire weapons.
- Securing cleared portions of the objective.
- Providing squads to assume assault element missions.
- Providing resupply of ammunition, explosives, and personnel.
- Evacuating casualties, EPWs, and noncombatants.

c. **Reserves.** Companies fighting in urban terrain may not be able to designate a reserve, based on the number of troops required to conduct offensive operations. A platoon may be detached from the company to form a battalion reserve. The company reserve, if one is designated, should be mobile and prepared for commitment. Because of the available cover in urban areas, the reserve can stay close to forward units. The reserve normally follows within the same block so that it can immediately influence the attack. The size of the reserve is METT-TC dependent, but at company level, the reserve normally consists of a squad, detached from an organic platoon, or attached elements. In addition to the tasks discussed in FM 7-10, Chapter 4, the reserve may be called upon to

perform one or more of the following tasks based on the commander's priority of commitment:

- Assuming the mission of the assault element.
- Clearing bypassed enemy positions.
- Moving behind the assault element to provide security in cleared buildings, allowing the assault element to continue to move.

d. **Breaching Element.** At the company level, breaching is normally conducted by the assault element. However, a separate breaching element may be created and a platoon may be given this mission and task organized accordingly. The purpose of breaching is to provide the assault element with access to an urban objective. Breaching can be accomplished using explosive, ballistic, thermal, or mechanical methods. Ballistic breaching includes using direct fire weapons; mechanical breaching includes the use of crowbars, axes, saws, sledgehammers, or other mechanical entry devices. Thermal breaching is accomplished through the use of a torch to cut metal items such as door hinges. Attached engineers, or a member of the assault element who has had additional training in mechanical, thermal, ballistic, and explosive breaching techniques, may conduct the breach.

e. **Sample Task Organizations.** Task organization of the company varies based on the factors of METT-TC and the ROE.

(1) **Light Infantry Task Organization.** An Infantry company conducting this mission might task-organize as follows:

- Assault** Two rifle platoons and one rifle platoon(-) reinforced with engineers (attached to the platoons).
- Reserve** A squad from one of the platoons.
- Support** The company AT weapons, 60-mm mortar section, and M240 machine guns. (Other support provided by the battalion task force.)

(2) **Light/Heavy Task Organizations.** Different METT-TC factors might produce the following light/heavy task organizations:

**Example 1:**

- Assault** Two rifle platoons, each reinforced with engineers.
- Reserve** One rifle platoon.
- Support** BFV platoon and the company AT weapons and 60-mm mortar section. (Other support provided by the battalion task force.)

**Example 2:**

- Assault** Two rifle platoons reinforced with engineers.
- Reserve** One rifle platoon.
- Support** One tank platoon. The company AT weapons and 60-mm mortar section.

**Example 3:**

**Assault** Two rifle platoons, each with engineers. One tank section OPCON to an Infantry platoon.

**Reserve** One rifle platoon.

**Support** A tank section and the company AT weapons under the tank platoon leader's control. The company 60-mm mortar section. (All available direct and indirect fire weapons should be used to isolate objective buildings. Direct fire down streets and indirect fire in open areas between buildings to help in the objective isolation.)

**NOTE:** The company commander may use the company executive officer, tank platoon leader, BFV platoon leader, or first sergeant to control the support element, as the task organization and situation dictate. Based on METT-TC factors, a BFV platoon can perform any of the missions described above (assault, support, reserve). Unit integrity should be maintained at the platoon level. If the tactical situation requires the employment of sections, it should be for a limited duration and distance.

**4-34. DELIBERATE ATTACK**

At the company level, a deliberate attack of an urban area usually involves the sequential execution of the tactical tasks below.

a. **Reconnoiter the Objective.** This method involves making a physical reconnaissance of the objective with company assets and those of higher headquarters, as the tactical situation permits. It also involves a map reconnaissance of the objective and all the terrain that affects the mission, to include the analysis of aerial imagery, photographs, or any other detailed information about the building or other urban terrain, which the company is responsible for. Additionally, any human intelligence (HUMINT) collected by reconnaissance and surveillance units, such as the battalion reconnaissance platoon, snipers, and so forth, should be considered during the planning process.

b. **Move to the Objective.** This method may involve moving the company tactically through open and or urban terrain. Movement should be made as rapidly as possible without sacrificing security. Movement should be made along covered and concealed routes and can involve moving through buildings, down streets, subsurface areas, or a combination of all three. Urban movement must take into account the three-dimensional aspect of the urban area.

c. **Isolate the Objective.** Isolating the objective involves seizing terrain that dominates the area so that the enemy cannot supply, reinforce, or withdraw its defenders. It also includes selecting terrain that provides the ability to place suppressive fire on the objective. (This step may be taken at the same time as securing a foothold.) If isolating the objective is the first step, speed is necessary so that the defender has no time to react. Companies may be required to isolate an objective as part of a battalion operation or may be required to do so independently. Depending on the tactical situation, an Infantry company may isolate an objective by infiltration and stealth.

d. **Secure a Foothold.** Securing a foothold involves seizing an intermediate objective that provides cover from enemy fire and a location for attacking troops to enter

the urban area. The size of the foothold is METT-TC dependent and is usually a company intermediate objective. In some cases a large building may be assigned as a company intermediate objective (foothold). As the company attacks to gain a foothold, it should be supported by suppressive fire and smoke.

e. **Clear an Urban Area.** Before determining to what extent the urban area must be cleared, the factors of METT-TC must be considered. The ROE influence the TTP platoons and squads select as they move through the urban area and clear individual buildings and rooms.

(1) The commander may decide to clear only those parts necessary for the success of his mission if—

- An objective must be seized quickly.
- Enemy resistance is light or fragmented.
- The buildings in the area have large open areas between them. In this case, the commander would clear only those buildings along the approach to his objective, or only those buildings necessary for security. (See Figure 4-26.)

(2) A company may have a mission to systematically clear an area of all enemy. Through detailed analysis, the commander may anticipate that he will be opposed by a strong, organized resistance or will be in areas having strongly constructed buildings close together. Therefore, one or two platoons may attack on a narrow front against the enemy's weakest sector. They move slowly through the area, clearing systematically from room to room and building to building. The other platoon supports the clearing units and is prepared to assume their mission.

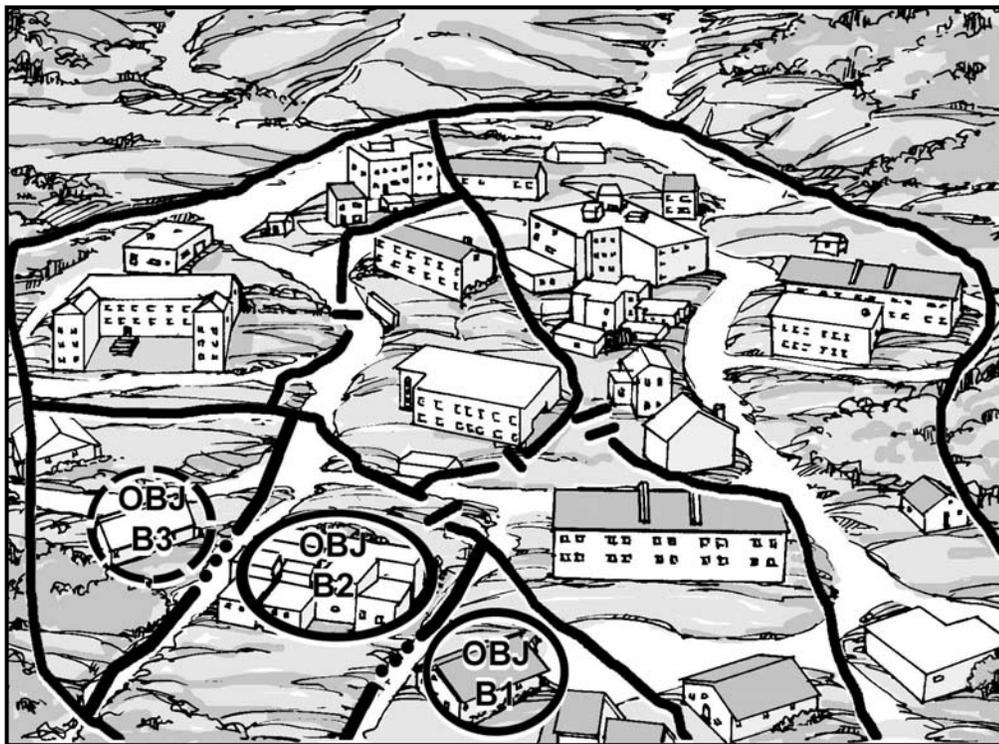


Figure 4-26. Clearing selected buildings within sector.

f. **Consolidate/Reorganize and Prepare for Future Missions.** Consolidation occurs immediately after each action. Consolidation is security and allows the company to prepare for counterattack and to facilitate reorganization. It is extremely important in an urban environment that units consolidate and reorganize rapidly after each engagement. The assault force in a cleared building must be quick to consolidate in order to repel enemy counterattacks and to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into the cleared building. After securing a floor, selected members of the assault force are assigned to cover potential enemy counterattack routes to the building. Priority must be given to securing the direction of attack first. Those soldiers alert the assault force and place a heavy volume of fire on enemy forces approaching the building. Reorganization occurs after consolidation. Reorganization actions prepare the unit to continue the mission; many actions occur at the same time.

(1) **Consolidation Actions.** Platoons assume hasty defensive positions after the objective has been seized or cleared. Based upon their specified and implied tasks, assaulting platoons should be prepared to assume an overwatch mission and support an assault on another building, or another assault within the building. Commanders must ensure that platoons guard enemy mouseholes between adjacent buildings, covered routes to the building, underground routes into the basement, and approaches over adjoining roofs.

(2) **Reorganization Actions.** After consolidation, the following actions are taken:

- Resupply and redistribute ammunition, equipment, and other necessary items.
- Mark the building to indicate to friendly forces that the building has been cleared.
- Move support or reserve elements into the objective if tactically sound.
- Redistribute personnel and equipment on adjacent structures.
- Treat and evacuate wounded personnel.
- Treat and evacuate wounded EPW and process remainder of EPW.
- Segregate and safeguard civilians.
- Re-establish the chain of command.
- Redistribute personnel on the objective to support the next phase or mission.

(3) **Prepare for Future Missions.** The company commander anticipates and prepares for future missions and prepares the company chain of command for transition to defensive and or stability and support missions.

**NOTE:** Friendly force situational awareness is significantly improved in digitally equipped units through the use of Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and below (FBCB2) assets.

#### **4-35. ISOLATE AN URBAN OBJECTIVE**

Infantry companies isolate an urban objective to prevent reinforcement of, or a counterattack against, the objective and to kill or capture any withdrawing enemy forces. When planning the isolation, commanders must consider three-dimensional and in-depth isolation of the objective (front, flanks, rear, upper stories, rooftops, and subsurface). All available direct and indirect fire weapons, to include attack helicopters and CAS, should be employed, consistent with the ROE. Isolating the objective is a key factor in facilitating the assault and preventing casualties. The company may perform this mission

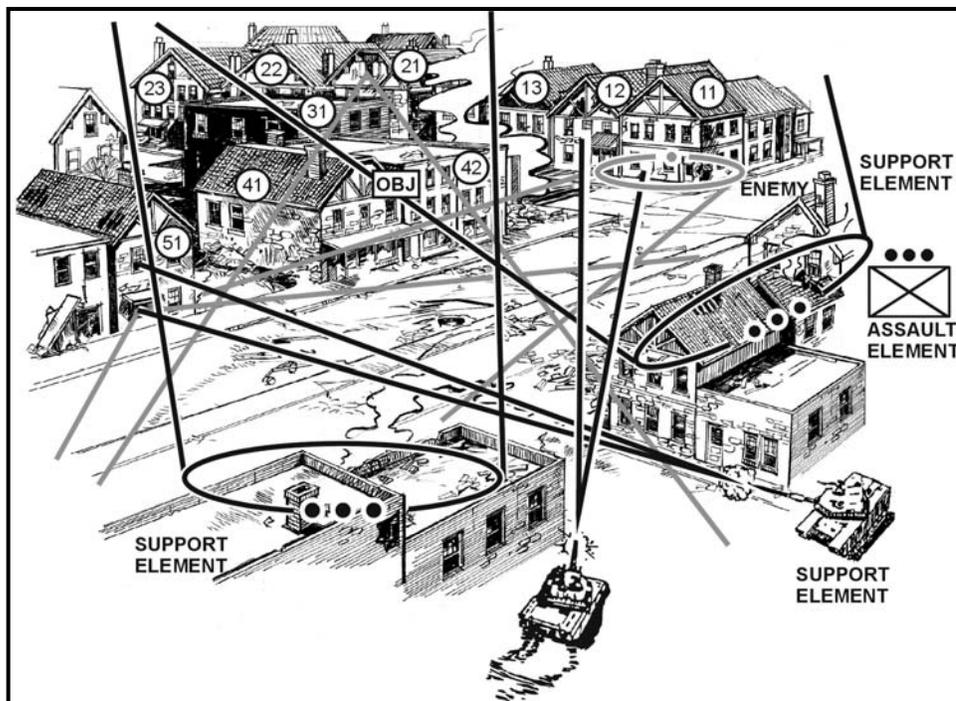
as the support element for a battalion operation, or it may assign the task to its own internal support element for a company attack. In certain situations, companies may be required to isolate an objective or an area for special operations forces or for stability/support operations. When possible, the objective should be isolated using stealth and or rapid movement in order to surprise the enemy. Depending on the tactical situation, companies may use infiltration in order to isolate the objective. Likely tasks include, but are not limited to, the ones described below.

**NOTE:** Combat experience and recent rotations at the CTCs have shown that many casualties can be sustained when moving between buildings, down streets, and through open areas in order to gain entry into a building either to gain a foothold or to clear it. One of the purposes of isolation at the company level must be to dominate the outside area that leads to the point of entry in order to allow assaulting troops to enter the building without receiving effective fire from the enemy. This method is accomplished by the effective use of direct and indirect fires, obscurants, maintaining situational awareness, and exercising tactical patience prior to movement.

a. **Isolating the Objective (Battalion Attack).** A company may isolate the objective as the support element for a battalion operation. When a company is given this mission, the objective is normally a larger structure, a block, or a group of buildings. The company commander task-organizes his platoons and assigns them support by fire positions based on the factors of METT-TC. In addition to isolating the objective, the company (support element) may be given additional tasks that will be conducted on order or at the same time. Examples of these additional tasks include assuming assault element missions, securing cleared buildings, handling noncombatants and EPWs, and CASEVAC.

b. **Isolating the Objective (Company Attack).** When a company conducts an attack, the task organization and tasks given to the company support element is determined by the factors of METT-TC. If the company conducts an attack, the objective can be a building, a block or group of buildings, a traffic circle, or a small village (Figure 4-27, page 4-48). Emphasis must be placed on suppressing or neutralizing the fires on and around the objective. Figure 4-27 depicts an infantry company with tanks assaulting Buildings (BLDG) 41 and 42. In order to secure a foothold and clear BLDGs 41 and 42, the commander has assigned a platoon to support by fire and suppress the enemy squad in BLDG 11 and the medium machine gun in BLDG 21. A tank section suppresses the light machine gun in BLDG 51 and assists in the suppression of BLDG 11. Another platoon supports by fire and suppresses any enemy fire from BLDGs 31, 41, and 42. The company's third platoon, positioned in buildings behind the support element, acts as the assault element to clear BLDGs 41 and 42. In this manner, three-dimensional isolation of the objective (BLDGs 41 and 42) is accomplished.

**NOTE:** All buildings within the support element's sector of fire were numbered to facilitate command and control.



**Figure 4-27. Isolating an urban objective.**

c. **Tasks.** The company commander isolates the objective with direct and indirect fires before and during the assault element's execution of its mission. The company will—

- Suppress known, likely, and suspected enemy targets, consistent with the ROE, with direct and indirect fire weapons. Under restrictive ROE, suppression may be limited only to actual enemy locations.
- Cover mounted avenues of approach with antiarmor weapons.
- Cover dismounted avenues of approach with automatic weapons.
- Control key terrain near or adjacent to the objective in order to prevent the enemy from reinforcing his positions, withdrawing, or counterattacking.
- Be prepared to move to other locations in order to suppress enemy fires and neutralize enemy positions as the assault element performs its tasks.

(1) Company commanders must give specific instructions to subordinate leaders concerning where to place fires in support of the assault element. For example, from TRP 1 to TRP 2, along the third and second floor windows on the east side of Building 21, shift fires to the west side of the objective from TRP 1 to TRP 4 when the green star cluster is seen, and so on. Once suppressive fires on the objective begin, they normally increase and continue until masked by the advancing assault element. Suppressive fires may or may not be used from the beginning of the assault depending on the ROE. Targets can be marked and identified with tracer rounds; M203 smoke, HE, or illumination rounds; voice and arm-and-hand signals; laser pointers; or similar devices.

(2) The precise well-placed volume of fire, as opposed to a volume of fire, suppresses the enemy. The volume of fire and types of weapons employed is ROE dependent. Once masked, fires are shifted to upper or lower windows and continued until the assault force

has entered the building. At that time, fires are shifted to adjacent buildings to prevent enemy withdrawal or reinforcement. If the ROE are restrictive, the use of supporting fires is normally limited to known enemy locations that have engaged the unit.

**NOTE:** Care must be taken in urban areas when WP, ILLUM, or tracers are used since urban fires can be caused. Care must also be exercised, if sabot rounds are used by the armored vehicles, based on the its penetration capability. Sabot rounds can penetrate many walls and travel great distances to include passing through multiple buildings, creating unintended damage, casualties, and fratricide.

#### 4-36. ASSAULT A BUILDING

The company conducts this mission as part of the assault element of a battalion task force or independently. (Independently is defined here as a company having to provide its own support element, as opposed to conducting an operation without flank and rear support, such as a raid or ambush.) If it is conducted as the assault element of a battalion task force, it will probably be conducted against a large building defended by a strong enemy force; for example, a reinforced platoon. Company commanders need to clearly understand the specified and implied tasks that are required to accomplish the mission, as well as the brigade/battalion commanders' intent and the desired mission end-state. This procedure allows the company commander to task-organize and issue specific missions to his subordinate elements as to which floors and rooms to clear, seize, or bypass. As an example, Figure 4-28, on page 4-50, depicts an Infantry TF assigned the mission of clearing the objectives in its sector (DOG and TAIL). Company B has been given the TF supporting effort of seizing and clearing OBJ TAIL. The company commander has decided to assign an intermediate objective (WING) to 1st platoon. 3d platoon is the support element with the mission of isolating WING (1st and 2d squads) and providing one squad to act as the company reserve (3d squad). 2d platoon has the mission of passing through 1st platoon, which will mark a passage lane and seize TAIL.

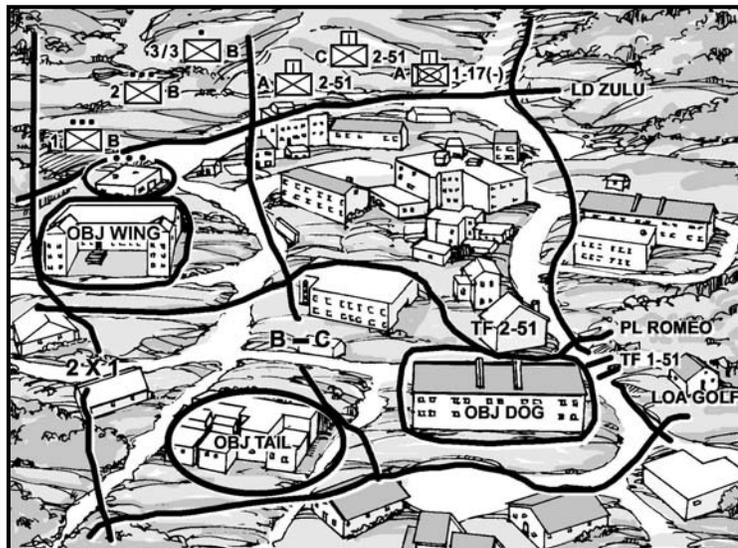


Figure 4-28. Assault of a building.

a. **Execution.** Platoons should move by bounds by floor when clearing a multistory building. This procedure permits troops to rest after a floor has been cleared. It is likely that platoons are required to leave security on floors and in cleared rooms and also facilitate the passage of another platoon in order to continue the assault. The assault element must quickly and violently execute its assault and subsequent clearing operations. Once momentum has been gained, it is maintained to prevent the enemy from organizing a more determined resistance on other floors or in other rooms. If platoons come across rooms/hallways/stairwells that are barricaded with furniture or where obstacles have been placed, they should first attempt to bypass the barricade or obstacle and maintain the momentum of the attack. If they cannot bypass the barricade or obstacle, security should be placed on it, it should be checked for booby traps, and should then be reduced. Also, sealing doors and floors may be an option in order to maintain momentum. Subordinate leaders should continue the momentum of the assault, yet not allow the operation to become disorganized.

b. **Ammunition and Equipment.** METT-TC factors and the ROE determine how the assault element is equipped and armed. The assault element carries only a fighting load of equipment and as much ammunition as possible, especially grenades (fragmentation, smoke, concussion, and stun consistent with the building construction and the ROE). The support element maintains control of additional ammunition and equipment not immediately needed by the assault element. An often-overlooked munition in an urban battle is the light antitank weapon such as the M72 LAW and the AT4. Soldiers can use these for a variety of purposes such as suppressing a manned position or supporting the breaching or assault elements. Resupply should be pushed to the assault element by the support element. Commanders must carefully manage the soldier's load during the assault. Normally, ammunition, water, special assault weapons/equipment, and medical supplies/litters are the only items carried in the assault. Attached or OPCON tank or BFV platoons should also configure their ammunition load to support their mission, consistent with the ROE.

c. **Assault Locations.** The assault may begin from the top or bottom of the building.

(1) **Top Entry.** Entry at the top and fighting downward is the preferred method of clearing a building. This method is only feasible, however, when access to an upper floor or rooftop can be gained by ladder; from the windows or roofs of adjoining, secured buildings; or when enemy air defense weapons can be suppressed and troops can be transported to the rooftops by helicopter.

(2) **Bottom Entry.** Entry at the bottom is common and may be the only option available. When entering from the bottom, breaching a wall is the preferred method because doors and windows may be booby trapped and covered by fire from inside the structure. If the assault element must enter through a door or window, entry from a rear or flank position is preferred. Under certain situations, the ROE may not permit the use of certain explosives, therefore entry through doors and windows may be the only option available. Armored vehicles can be especially useful in supporting bottom entry.

d. **Breaching.** Squads and platoons will have to conduct breaching. Engineers may be attached to the unit responsible for breaching. Depending on the factors of METT-TC, company commanders may need to designate specific breaching locations or delegate the task to platoon leaders. The ROE also influences whether mechanical, thermal, ballistic, or explosive breaching is used. For example, if BFVs are attached to the company and the

ROE permit their use, they can breach the wall by main-gun fire for the initial-entry point.

e. **Assault Tasks.** Once inside the building, the priority tasks are to cover the staircases and to seize rooms that overlook approaches to the building. These actions are required to isolate enemy forces within the building and to prevent reinforcement from the outside. The assault element clears each room on the entry floor and then proceeds to clear the other floors to include the basement. If entry is not made from the top, consideration may be given to rushing/clearing and securing a stairwell and clearing from the top down, if the tactical situation permits. If stairwell use is required, minimize their use and clear them last. If there is a basement, it should be cleared as soon as possible, preferably at the same time as the ground floor. The procedures for clearing a basement are the same as for any room or floor, but important differences do exist. Basements may contain entrances to tunnels such as sewers and communications cable tunnels. These should be cleared and secured to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into cleared areas.

**DANGER**  
**A SAFETY CONSIDERATION FOR CLEARING**  
**BUILDINGS IS THE HIGH PROBABILITY OF**  
**RICOCHET.**

f. **Suppressive Fires During the Assault.** The support element provides suppressive fire while the assault element is systematically clearing the building. It also provides suppressive fire on adjacent buildings to prevent enemy reinforcements or withdrawal. Suppressive fire may consist of firing at known and suspected enemy locations; or, depending on the ROE, may only include firing at identified targets or returning fire when fired upon. The support element destroys or captures any enemy trying to exit the building. The support element must also deal with civilians displaced by the assault. Armored vehicles are useful in providing heavy, sustained, accurate fire.

g. **Clearing Rooms.** Company commanders must ensure that clearing platoons carry enough room marking equipment and plainly mark cleared rooms from the friendly side IAW unit SOP. (See Appendix I.) Also, if the operation occurs during limited visibility, marking must be visible to friendly units. The support element must understand which markings will be employed and ensure that suppressive fires do not engage cleared rooms and floors. Maintaining situational awareness concerning the location of the assault teams and which rooms/floors have been cleared is imperative and a key command and control function for the company commander. Radios can be consolidated, if necessary, with priority going to the squads and platoons clearing rooms. When exiting cleared buildings friendly troops should notify supporting elements using the radio or other preplanned signals.

#### **4-37. ATTACK OF A BLOCK OR GROUP OF BUILDINGS**

A company team normally attacks a block or group of buildings as part of a battalion task force. To attack a block or a group of buildings, a company team may need to be

reinforced with BFVs or tanks and engineers, consistent with the ROE and the enemy situation.

a. **Execution.** The execution of this mission is characterized by platoon attacks supported by both direct and indirect fires. Success depends on isolating the enemy positions which often become platoon objectives, suppressing enemy weapons, seizing a foothold in the block, and clearing the block's buildings room by room.

b. **Direct Fire Weapons.** BFVs, tanks, machine guns, and other direct fire support weapons fire on the objective from covered positions, consistent with the ROE. These weapons should not be fired for prolonged periods from one position. The gunners should use a series of positions and displace from one to another to gain better fields of fire and to avoid being targeted by the enemy. Direct fire support tasks can be assigned as follows:

(1) Machine guns fire along streets and into windows, doors, mouseholes, and other probable enemy positions. ROE may restrict firing only to known enemy locations.

(2) BFVs, tanks, and antitank weapons fire at enemy tanks and other armored vehicles can also provide a countersniper capability due to their range and target acquisition capability.

(3) Tanks fire at targets protected by walls and provide protection against enemy tanks, as required.

(4) BFVs may be used to create breaches with the 25-mm gun and TOW.

(5) Riflemen engage targets of opportunity.

c. **Obscuration and Assault.** Before an assault, the company commander should employ smoke to conceal the assaulting platoons. He secures their flanks with direct fire weapons and by employment of the reserve, if necessary. Concealed by smoke and supported by direct fire weapons, an assaulting platoon attacks the first isolated building. The assault element utilizes the cover of suppressive fires to gain a foothold. The company commander must closely coordinate the assault with its supporting fire so that the fire is shifted at the last possible moment. The squads and platoons then clear each designated building. After seizing the block, the company consolidates and reorganizes to repel a counterattack or to continue the attack. Periods of limited visibility may provide the best conditions to attack, especially if NVGs provide the company a technological advantage over the threat.

**NOTE:** Obscuration rounds may cause uncontrolled fires in the city and must be carefully planned.

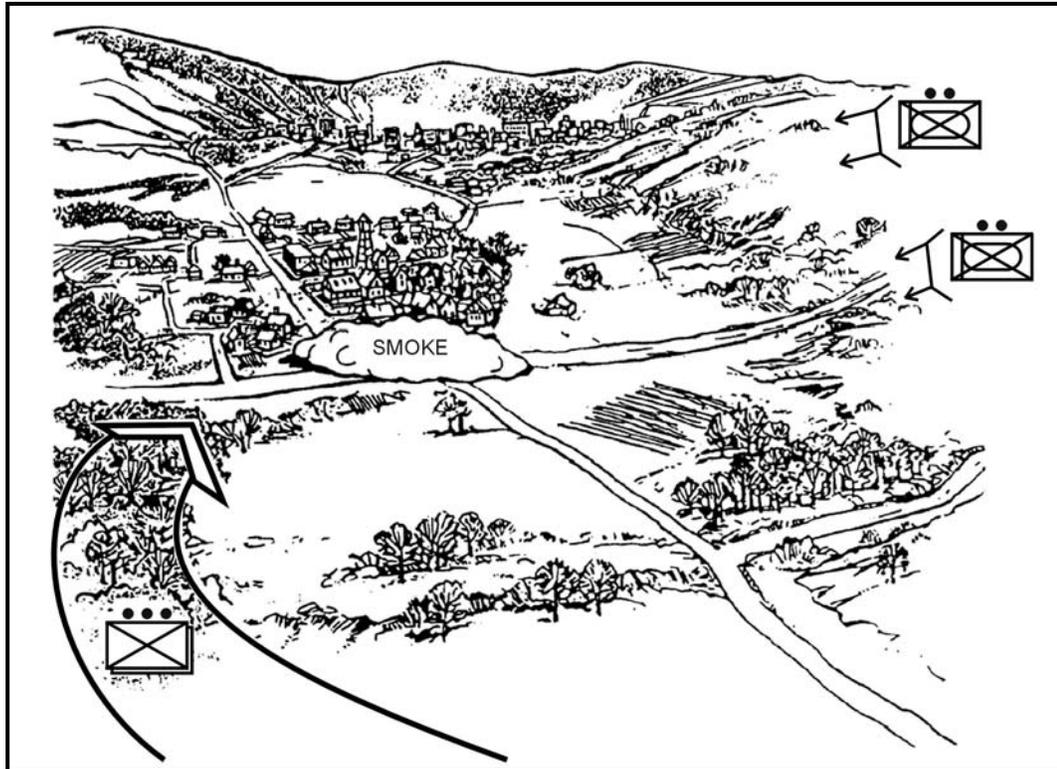
#### 4-38. HASTY ATTACK

A company team may find itself moving to an urban area or conducting a movement to contact with a mission of clearing a village of enemy. The following discussion provides a technique for conducting a hasty attack on a village. The company commander makes a quick assessment of the factors of METT-TC and reacts appropriately to support the higher level commander's intent.

a. **Establish Support.** If attached or OPCON, tanks, BFVs, MK19s or M2HBs mounted on HMMWVs, and TOWs assume support-by-fire positions from which they can fire on the village, prevent the enemy from withdrawing, and destroy any reinforcements (support element functions). If these assets are not available, then the

company commander moves Infantry elements into position to accomplish the same tasks. The company's 60-mm mortar and AT sections also provide fire support. Armored vehicles can reposition during the assault, if necessary, to gain better fields of fire and provide better support.

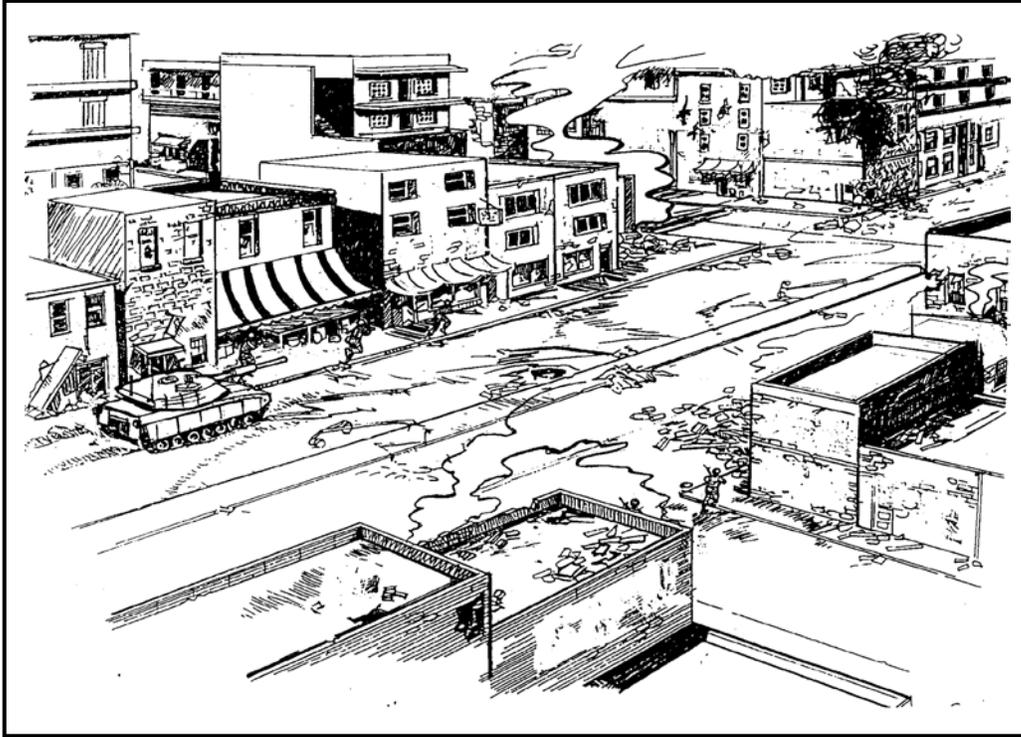
b. **Assault the Village.** The rifle platoons assault from a covered route so as to hit the village at a vulnerable point (Figure 4-29). As the platoons approach the village, smoke is employed to screen their movement and supporting fires are shifted. Once the platoons close on the village, they clear the buildings quickly, consistent with the ROE, and consolidate. The company is then ready to continue operations.



**Figure 4-29. Hasty attack of a village.**

#### **4-39. MOVEMENT TO CONTACT AND RECONNAISSANCE**

In a fast-moving situation, a company team may have to conduct a movement to contact through an urban area to fix enemy forces (Figure 4-30, page 4-54). Similarly, a company team may have to reconnoiter such a route to prepare for a battalion task force attack or other mission. This type of reconnoiter is accomplished with a company team. It is preferable to conduct this mission with tanks and or BFVs. The actual task organization will be determined by the factors of METT-TC.



**Figure 4-30. Movement to contact through an urban area.**

a. **Tempo.** These operations are characterized by alternating periods of rapid movement to quickly cover distances and much slower movement for security. The speed of movement selected depends on the terrain and enemy situation.

b. **Execution.** An infantry company without support from tanks or BFVs would conduct travelling overwatch or bounding overwatch along urban routes. In open areas where rapid movement is possible due to terrain, a tank section should lead, if available. In closer terrain, the infantry should lead while overwatched by the tanks. Another infantry platoon and the other tank section should move on a parallel street. Artillery fire should be planned along the route. Engineers accompany the lead platoon on the main route to help clear obstacles and mines.

c. **Danger Areas.** The company should cross danger areas (crossroads, bridges, and overpasses, and so forth) by a combination of actions:

- Between danger areas, the company moves with the infantry mounted, or rapidly on foot, when contact is not likely.
- When enemy contact is likely, the company moves to clear enemy positions or to secure the danger area. Tanks and other combat vehicles support infantry.

d. **Axis of Advance.** In peripheral areas, this advance should be on one axis with the lead unit well forward and security elements checking side streets as they are reached. In the city core, this operation is conducted as a coordinated movement on two or three axes for more flank security.

e. **Enemy Positions.** Enemy positions can be either destroyed by the company itself or, if the need for speed is great, bypassed, reported, and left to following units if the situation allows.

f. **Coordination.** The company commander must ensure that the actions of platoons and attached or OPCON elements are coordinated. Situational awareness must be maintained in a rapidly moving or changing environment. The company commander reports all information collected to the battalion task force.

#### 4-40. SEIZURE OF KEY URBAN TERRAIN

A traffic circle, bridge or overpass that spans a canal, a building complex, or, in some cases, the population itself are examples of key urban terrain. Therefore, seizing such terrain intact and securing it for friendly use is a likely mission for a company team. The discussion below describes the TTP for seizing and controlling a bridge and seizing a traffic circle.

a. **Seizure of a Bridge.** For this mission (Figure 4-31), a company team should perform the following actions.

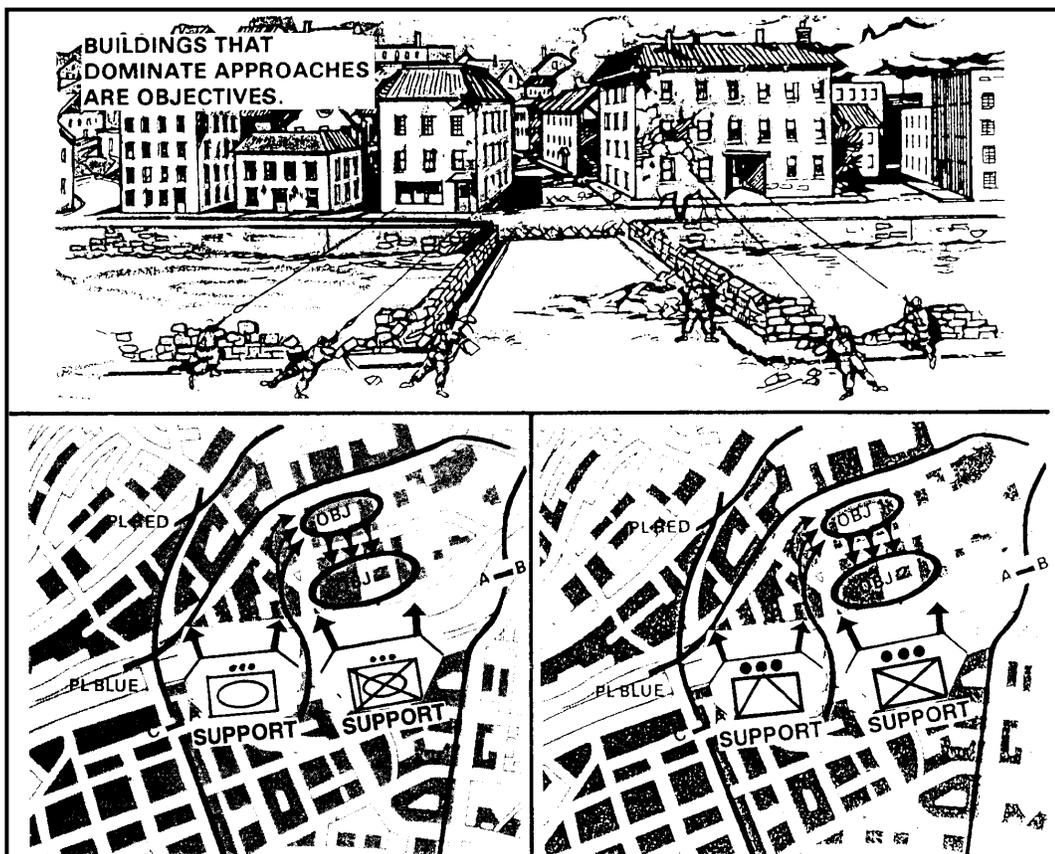


Figure 4-31. Seizure of a bridge.

(1) **Clear the Near Bank.** The first step in seizing a bridge is to clear the buildings on the near bank that overwatch the bridge and the terrain on the far side. The commander must find out which buildings dominate the approaches to the bridge. Buildings that permit him to employ anti-tank weapons, machine guns, and riflemen are cleared while supporting fire prevents the enemy from reinforcing his troops on the far bank and keeps enemy demolition parties away from the bridge.

(2) **Suppress.** Suppress enemy weapons on the far bank with direct and indirect fire. In suppressing the enemy's positions on the far bank, priority is given to those positions from which the enemy can fire directly down the bridge. Tanks, BFVs, TOWs, and machine guns mounted on HMMWVs are effective in this role. TOWs, Dragons, Javelins, and AT4s can be used against enemy tanks covering the bridge. Use screening smoke to limit enemy observation. All suppression must be consistent with the ROE.

(3) **Assault.** Seize a bridgehead (buildings that overwatch and dominate the bridge) on the far bank by an assault across the bridge. The objectives of the assaulting platoons are buildings that dominate the approaches to the bridge on the far side. One or two platoons assault across the bridge using all available cover while concealed by smoke. In addition to a frontal assault across the bridge, other routes should be considered. They are supported by the rest of the company and any attached and OPCON forces. Once on the other side, they call for the shifting of supporting fire and start clearing buildings. When the first buildings are cleared, supporting fire is lifted and or shifted again and the assault continues until all the buildings in the objective area are cleared.

(4) **Clear the Bridge.** Secure a perimeter around the bridge so that the engineers can clear any obstacles and remove demolitions from the bridge. The company commander may expand his perimeter to prepare for counterattack. Once the bridge is cleared, tanks, BFVs, and other support vehicles are brought across to the far bank.

b. **Seizure of a Traffic Circle.** A company may have to seize a traffic circle either to secure it for friendly use or to deny it to the enemy (Figure 4-32). This operation consists of seizing and clearing the buildings that control the traffic circle, and bringing direct-fire weapons into position to cover it. After gathering all available intelligence on the terrain, enemy, and population, the commander takes the following steps:

- Isolates the objective.
- Seizes and or clears the buildings along the traffic circle.
- Consolidates and prepares for counterattack.

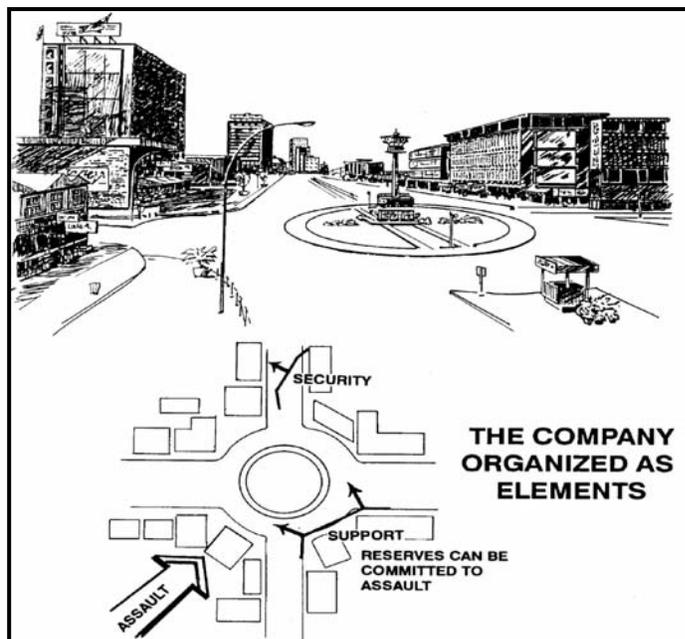


Figure 4-32. Seizure of a traffic circle.

(1) **Troop Safety.** Friendly troops should not venture into the traffic circle until it is secure. A traffic circle is a natural kill zone.

(2) **Task Organization.** The company should be organized with assault, support, and reserve elements based on the factors of METT-TC and the ROE.

(a) **Assault.** Seizes and or clears the terrain (buildings) that influence the objective. (For example, two rifle platoons, reinforced with engineers.)

(b) **Support.** Isolates the traffic circle and provides security. This element can be mounted (preferred) or dismounted; for example, an infantry platoon with a section of BFVs. Provides direct fire support for the assault element. The element could consist of tanks, BFVs, TOWs, MK 19s, or M2HBs mounted on HMMWVs, occupying a support-by-fire position.

(c) **Reserve.** Reinforces the assault element on order. (Normally a detached squad from one of the rifle platoons.)

(3) **Flexibility.** At various stages in this operation, roles may change. For example, the assault element may clear buildings until the support element can no longer support it. Then the reserve can be committed to the assault. It may also occur that one of the assault elements finds itself in a better position to isolate the traffic circle and becomes the support element. At that time, the isolating (support) element would become part of the assault element. The support element may also have to reposition to continue support.

#### 4-41. DIRECT FIRE PLANNING AND CONTROL

One of the company commander's primary responsibilities will be to plan and control direct fires during the attack of an urban objective. The information below applies to a company isolating an objective for either a battalion or company attack. Direct fire support can be very resource intensive. Commanders must ensure that enough ammunition is available to support their fire plans.

a. **Principles of Direct Fire Planning.** A thorough direct fire plan will adhere to the principles stated below.

(1) **Mass fires.** Massing of fires is defined by the terminal effect on the enemy, not by the number of systems firing or the number of rounds fired. Mass must not be confused with volume of fires. Massing fires is achieved by placing accurate fires on multiple targets at the same time. This method means firing at enemy targets in or outside of buildings laterally and in depth. The objective is to force the enemy to respond to multiple threats and to kill or suppress enemy soldiers or positions.

(2) **Leaders control fires.** Leaders must control fires to simultaneously engage different priority targets. Allowing individual crews to select their own priority target will probably result in multiple systems engaging the same target while leaving other dangerous targets free to engage and possibly maneuver against friendly units.

(3) **Fire plans must be understood by the soldiers who execute them.** It is imperative that every soldier understands how to execute his portion of the direct fire plan. This understanding is necessary in order to avoid fratricide. This understanding is also necessary to ensure destruction or suppression of enemy soldiers and positions. A soldier must be able to identify where they are responsible for firing and if there is an enemy to engage. Then he must understand how his fires are to be controlled and directed during

the course of the fight. Ensuring terms are commonly understood assists all involved. Exchanging SOPs, chalk talks, terrain models, and rehearsals assist in understanding.

(4) **Focus fires.** Focusing fires means accurately directing fires to hit specific targets, points, or areas, and is the most difficult task of controlling fires. The commander focuses fires by clearly conveying instructions (either preplanned or hasty) to direct the fires of the individual platoons on specific targets or areas that support his plan for distribution. Platoons must be able to recognize the point at which to focus their fires. Failure to do so will result in different units/assets in the support element engaging the same targets, while others are not engaged. Recognizable control measures allow the support element to focus fires (see paragraph d). OPORDs and rehearsals must paint the visual picture of how the commander wants the fires focused and what the platoons will see to focus their fires.

(5) **Distribute fires.** Distributing fires is the process of engaging different enemy threats simultaneously to avoid overkill by multiple systems engaging the same targets and to degrade the enemy's ability to deal with single threats one at a time. Proper distribution ensures critical targets are engaged first and the enemy is engaged three dimensionally. The following points should be emphasized:

a. Avoid target overkill. Minimize engaging targets that are already destroyed or suppressed.

b. Use each weapon system in its best role. Different weapons systems and ammunition types have specific characteristics that maximize their capability to kill or suppress specific enemy weapons systems at different ranges. For example, an AT 4 can be used to suppress an enemy sniper position, but it will probably not destroy the position itself.

c. Destroy the most dangerous targets first. Proper focus, distribution, and firing first are the keys to maximizing this principle.

d. Concentrate on enemy crew-served weapons and combat vehicles. This method deprives the enemy of his ability to use his fire support weapons against friendly troops.

e. Take the best shots and expose only those weapons systems actually needed to fire in order to maximize the probability of hitting and killing enemy targets, and to protect friendly forces as long as possible.

(6) **Shift fires.** Shifting fires is the process of re-focusing weapons systems to change the distribution of fires as targets are destroyed or as the situation changes, for example, the introduction of new forces on the battlefield. At the company level, this method is accomplished by shifting the fires of the support element and focusing them on new targets. This fire may be used to isolate, suppress, prevent counterattack/reinforcement, and so forth.

(7) **Rehearse the fire plan.** The most important part of any operation that requires soldiers to shoot their weapons is the fire plan. Every fire plan must be rehearsed; for example, what is the fire plan and how is it executed in each phase: isolation/gaining a foothold, breaching, assault of the building. A rehearsed fire plan enhances execution, prevents fratricide, identifies shortcomings, and works to synchronize the operation.

b. **Questions to Answer.** When the direct fire plan is complete, the commander should be able to answer the following questions:

- How does the fire plan help achieve success at the decisive point?
- What is the company mission and the desired effect of our fires?

- Is the fire plan consistent with the ROE?
- Where are combat vehicles or other dangerous weapons systems?
- Which course of action has the enemy selected?
- What are the PIR to determine the enemy's actions?
- Where are we going to kill or suppress the enemy?
- From where will we engage him?
- Which enemy weapons do we want to engage first?
- How will we initiate fires with each weapon system?
- Which weapons will fire first? What will each engage? What are the engagement criteria?
- What is the desired effect of fires from each unit in the support element?
- How will we distribute the fires of platoons to engage the enemy three dimensionally?
- What will the support element focus their fires on? (How will the support element units know where to engage? Will they be able to see and understand the control measures?)
- How will we mass fires to deal with multiple enemy threats and achieve the desired volume of fire?
- Where will leaders be positioned to control fires; how will we focus fires on new targets?
- How will we deal with likely enemy reactions to our fires?
- Does the plan avoid overkill; use each weapon system in its best role; concentrate on combat vehicles, take the best shots, expose only those friendly weapons needed, destroy the most dangerous targets first?
- Have my fires been massed to achieve suppression, obscuration, and security needs of the breach?
- Will the fires be masked by buildings or assault element movement?

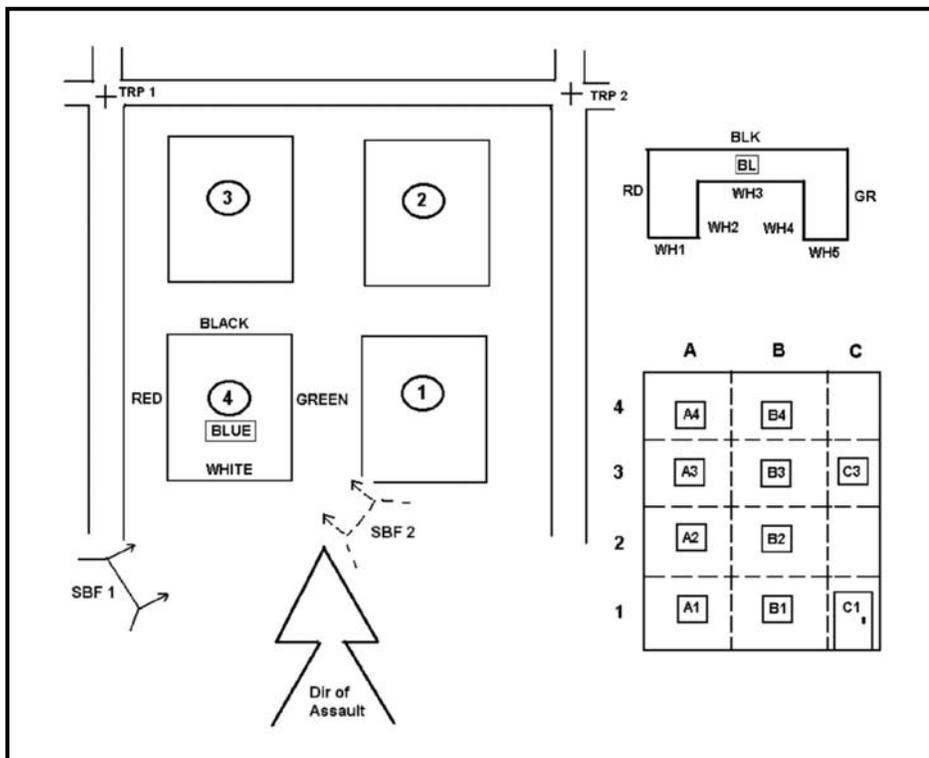
c. **Fire Commands.** Fire commands are verbal orders used to control direct fires. They are standard formats that rapidly and concisely articulate the firing instructions for single or multiple engagements. They can be given over the radio or landline to control fires. At company level fire commands must control the fires of multiple elements with different weapons systems. Fire commands should concentrate on ensuring that the support element is accurately focused and understands its portion of fire distribution. Platoon leaders generally give these commands after the company commander gives the order to initiate fires. A general format includes:

- Alert (call sign).
- Weapon ammunition (optional, METT-TC dependent).
- Target description.
- Location or method to focus fires.
- Control pattern technique (optional, METT-TC dependent).
- Execution (my command, your command, event).

**Sample Fire Command:**

- “Tango 27 (PSG) This is Tango 16 (PL), over”- Alert
- “7.62mm, 40mm, and AT 4s” – Weapons/ammunition
- “Windows and Door” – Target description
- “OBJ 4; White; A1, B1, C1” – Location
- “Fire” – Execution.

d. **Direction of Assault Technique of Direct Fire Control.** In this technique, the company commander assigns building numbers in a consistent pattern in relation to the direction of assault. In the example shown in Figure 4-33 on page 4-62, the commander numbered the buildings consecutively, in a counterclockwise manner. Further, the sides of the buildings were color coded consistently throughout the objective area (WHITE=direction of assault side; GREEN=right side; BLACK=rear side; RED=left side; BLUE=roof). An odd-shaped building is also shown. Note that a *four-sided* concept was retained to minimize confusion. Further designations of WHITE 1, WHITE 2, WHITE 3, and so on from left to right can be added to specify which wall will be engaged. Apertures on the buildings are also labeled consecutively using rows and columns, as shown. In the example, “OBJ 4, WHITE, window A1” is the lower left-hand window on the direction of assault side of OBJ 4. All designations are labeled in relation to the direction of assault. (See FM 34-130 for additional information on building shapes and structural labeling.)



**Figure 4-33. Direction of assault technique of direct fire control.**

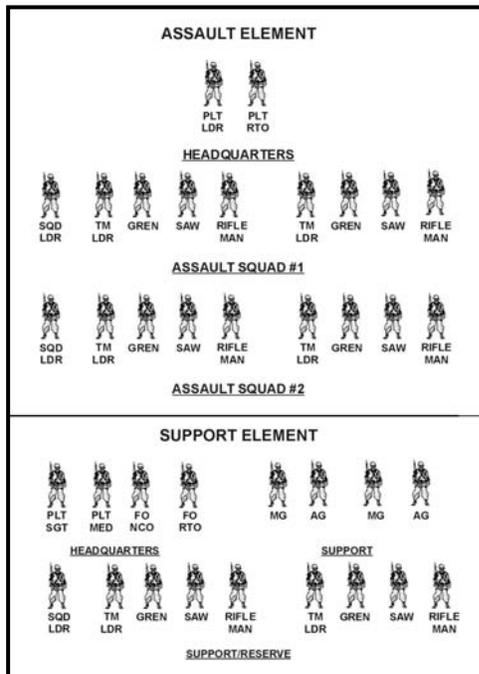
**Section VIII. PLATOON ATTACK OF AN URBAN AREA**

The Infantry platoon will normally conduct offensive tasks as part of a company mission. However, there may be times that the platoon will be required to perform an independent offensive operation in support of the main effort. This section discusses how the platoon conducts the various tasks as part of a company operation or as an independent mission.

**4-42. TASK ORGANIZATION (PLATOON ATTACK OF A BUILDING)**

The platoon leader will normally organize his platoon into at least two elements: an assault element consisting of two rifle squads, and a support element consisting of the platoon’s crew-served weapons and one rifle squad as the support or reserve (Figure 4-34). If engineers are not available, he can designate a breaching team from within either the assault or the support element or, depending on the situation, he may task organize a separate breach element. The size and composition of these elements are determined by the mission given, the number of troops available, the type and size of the objective building, whether the adjacent terrain provides open or covered approaches, and the organization and strength of the enemy defenses. As part of a company operation, the platoon will be part of either the assault element or the support element.

- As part of the company’s assault element, the platoon would organize into three assault squads with two assault teams each, and will attach the machine guns to the company support element.
- As the part of the company’s support element, the platoon may be organized into three support squads with machine guns and antiarmor weapons attached. The attached machine guns provide the support element with added firepower for increased lethality.



**Figure 4-34. Platoon organization.**

a. **Assault Element.** The purpose of the assault element is to kill, capture, or force the withdrawal of the enemy from an urban objective and to seize key terrain. The assault element of a platoon may consist of one, two, or three squads. Squad leaders will normally organize their two fire teams into two assault teams or, in special circumstances, the squad may be kept as a single assault element.

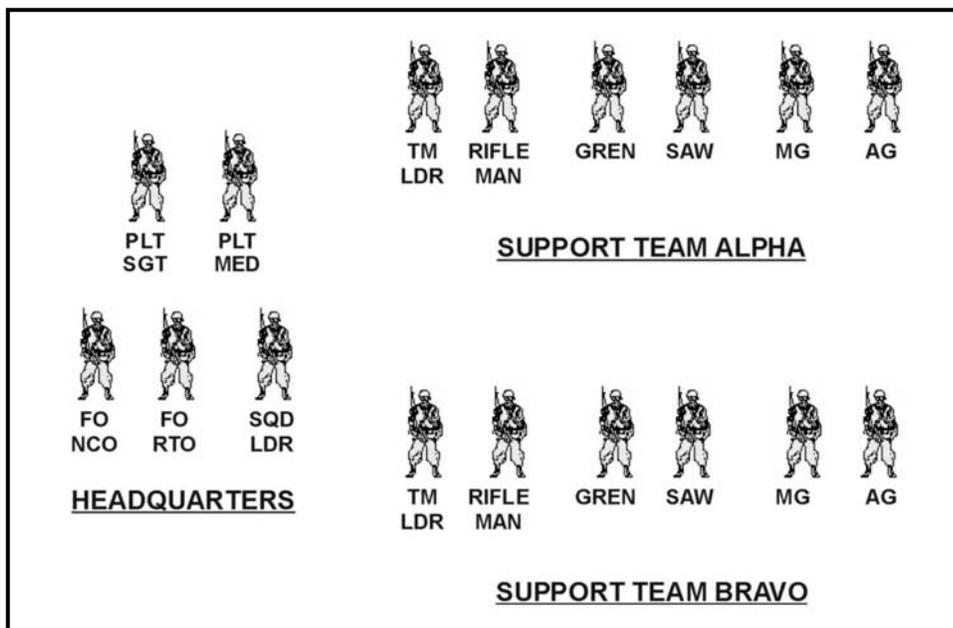
**NOTE:** Clearing techniques are designed to be executed by the standard four-man fire team. This method does not mean that all four members must enter a room to clear it. Because of the confined spaces typical of building/room clearing operations, units larger than squads quickly become awkward and unmanageable. When shortages of personnel demand it, two- and three-man teams can conduct room-clearing operations, but four-man teams are best suited. Using fewer personnel adds to the combat strain and greatly increases the risks to the team. For clearing large open buildings, such as hangars or warehouses, it may be necessary to commit two squads at the same time using a bounding overwatch movement technique to effectively cover the entire structure and provide force protection.

b. **Support Element.** The purpose of the support element (except for the medic) is to provide immediate suppressive fire support to enable the assault element to close with the enemy. Suppressive fires must be closely controlled to avoid excessive expenditure of ammunition and prevent fratricide. The support element is normally controlled by the platoon sergeant or a senior squad leader and normally consists of the platoon's crew-served weapons, light and medium antitank weapons systems, forward observer team, platoon medic, and any personnel not designated as part of the assault element (Figure 4-35). The support element provides both direct and indirect fire support and other assistance to advance the assault element. This support includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Suppressing enemy weapons systems and obscuring the enemy's observation within the objective building and adjacent structures.
- Isolating the objective building with direct and indirect fires to prevent enemy withdrawal, reinforcement, or counterattack.
- Obscuring enemy observation of obstacles en route to the objective and at the entry point of the objective during breaching operations.
- Destroying or suppressing enemy positions with direct fire weapons.
- Engaging armored vehicles.
- Securing cleared portions of the objective.
- Providing replacements for the assault element.
- Providing the resupply of ammunition and pyrotechnics.
- Bringing up specific equipment that the assault element could not carry in the initial assault.
- Treating and evacuating casualties, prisoners, and civilians.

**NOTE:** The platoon sergeant must be prepared to rapidly evacuate wounded from the objective area to the company casualty collection point (CCP). The use of ground ambulances may be impeded by rubble in the streets, barricades, and

demolition of roads; therefore, litter teams could be used extensively. Also, snipers can affect medical evacuation from forward positions.



**Figure 4-35. Platoon support element with squad integrated.**

c. **Breaching Element.** The purpose of the breaching element is to clear and mark lanes through obstacles during movement, providing the assault element with access to an urban objective. The platoon leader organizes the force to ensure breaching elements are designated. One technique is to assign one fire team from the assault element as the breaching element. Alternatively, the breach can be conducted using an attached engineer or any member of the assault or support element who has had additional breach training.

#### 4-43. MOVEMENT IN URBAN TERRAIN

As the lead element for the company when conducting movement, the platoon must be prepared to react to contact.

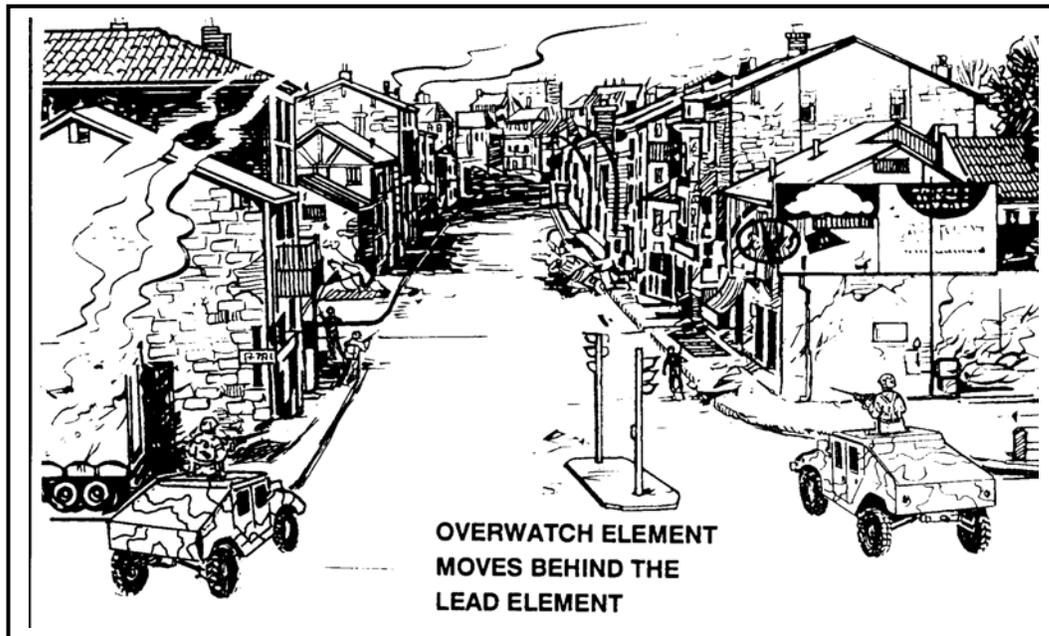
a. Platoon members must be ready to take cover and return fire immediately. They must also be alert for any signs or indications of the enemy and report promptly.

b. The rate of movement is controlled by the lead element based on the density of the urban terrain and enemy threat. In outlying or lightly defended areas, a mechanized infantry platoon may proceed along streets mounted, but send dismounted squads forward to reconnoiter key terrain (bridges, intersections or structural choke points).

c. Enemy action against the unit may come in the way of an ambush along a street, enfilade fire down the street, sniper fire from upper stories of buildings, or artillery and mortar fire when canalized. For protection from those types of threats, the platoon should move through buildings, along walls and other forms of cover, use tanks, BFV's, as well as indirect and direct fire weapons to overwatch and support movement.

d. The platoon moves using a lead maneuver element (one squad on narrow streets and two squads on wide streets). These squads will move forward along the streets using

buildings for cover when possible. They will scout danger areas and close with the enemy. An overwatching element (the rest of the platoon and the supporting weapons) will follow securing the flanks and rear while providing support to the point element. At any time the platoon leader may choose to rotate the point squad with an overwatching squad (Figure 4-36).



**Figure 4-36. Movement down a street.**

#### **4-44. ATTACKING IN URBAN TERRAIN**

As the culminating effort of a planned (deliberate) attack, or a result of a movement to contact, a meeting engagement or a chance contact during movement, the platoon may be required to be part of a company attack or conduct a platoon attack on an urban area or building.

a. The attack involves isolating the building to prevent the reinforcing or withdrawal of its defenders (normally planned at company level); suppressing the enemy with BFVs, tanks, machine gun and mortar fire; entering the building at the least defended point; and clearing the building. There must be close coordination between the isolation/support elements and the assault elements.

b. As the lead element in the company movement formation when a chance contact is made with the enemy (hasty attack), the platoon takes the following actions:

(1) Forward squad (or squads) will immediately return fire, get down, seek cover and suppress the enemy.

(2) Those squads not in direct fire contact will provide supporting fire with individual and crew-served weapons (to include tanks and BFVs, if attached). Engage known, then suspected, enemy positions.

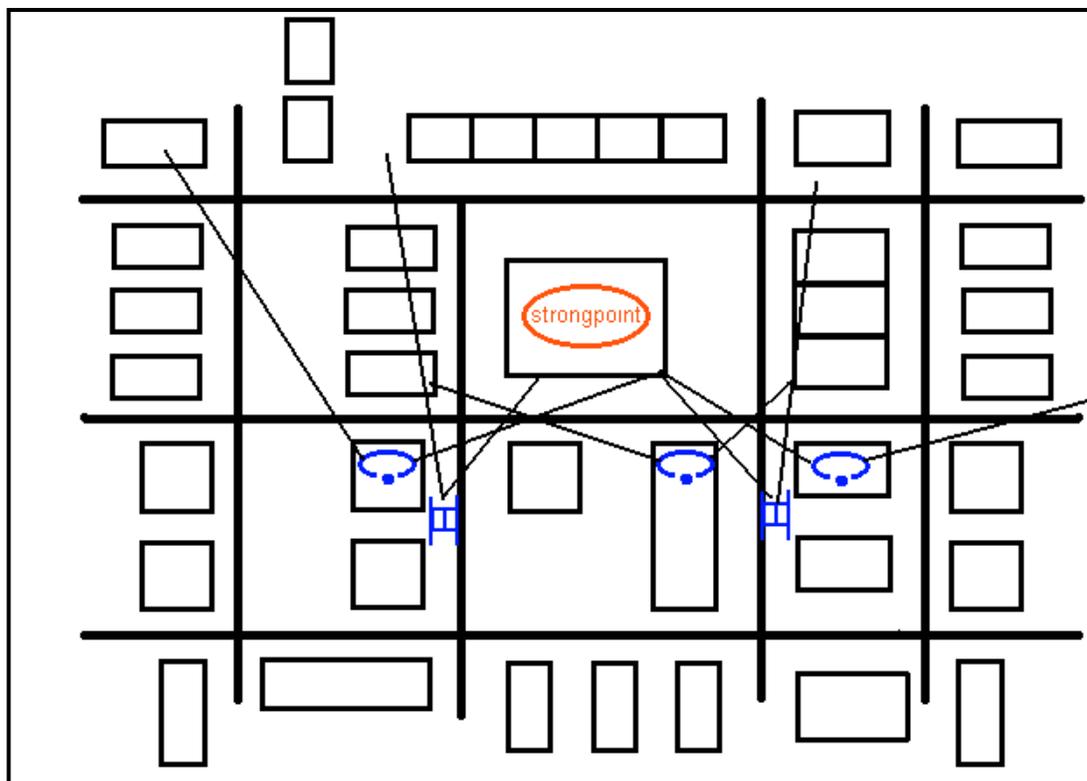
(3) Provide a situation report to the commander.

(4) The commander will either direct the platoon to establish a support by fire position in order to allow another platoon to assault or, if the threat is small and disorganized, he will direct the platoon in contact to conduct a platoon attack of the enemy position (subparagraph c, below).

c. When conducting a deliberate attack of an urban objective there are three steps that must be considered, planned and coordinated in order to achieve success.

- Isolate the objective.
- Enter the building (secure a foothold).
- Clear the building (room by room, floor by floor).

(1) Isolation of the objective requires the seizing of dominant terrain in order to cut off enemy routes for reinforcing, supplying, or facilitating the withdrawal of its defenders. The intent is to completely dominate what comes and goes within the objective area and provide early warning for the assault element (Figure 4-37).



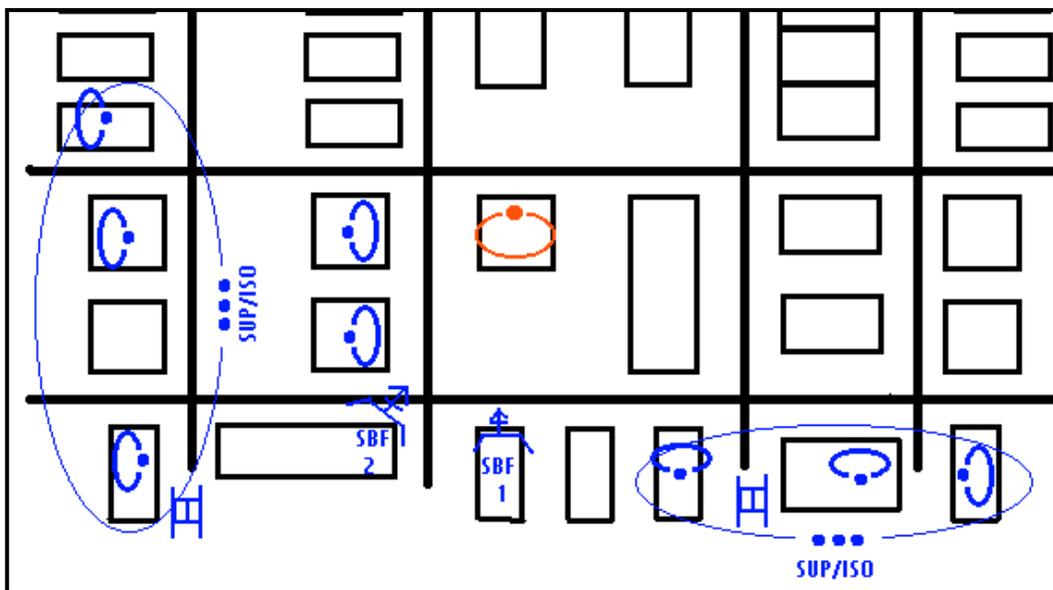
**Figure 4-37. Infantry platoon with two tanks as support element, isolating the objective.**

(2) As the assault element for the company, the platoon (or platoons) is responsible for entering and clearing the objective building. This method may involve creating a breach into the building and securing a foothold as well as killing, capturing or forcing the withdrawal of all enemy personnel within the structure. Squads and teams perform room clearing. The squad leader controls the maneuver of the two fire teams as they clear along hallways, stairways, and in rooms. (See Chapter 3.) The platoon leader alternates

the squads as required, and maintains momentum, and ensures resupply of ammunition and water.

d. If a platoon is conducting an assault of a building independently, it should be organized with an assault element and a support element (Figure 4-38). The assault element, usually led by the platoon leader, normally consists of two squads with two fire teams each. The support element, usually controlled by the platoon sergeant, normally consists of one rifle squad equipped with antitank weapons, two medium machine gun crews, and attached forward observers. The support element must designate individuals to provide flank and rear security. In addition to its own support element, BFVs, tanks, and other company assets can support the platoon.

**NOTE:** Isolation of the surrounding area is conducted by the rest of the company.



**Figure 4-38. Platoon attack of a building with two platoons isolating.**

**4-45. PLATOON ASSAULT OF A BUILDING**

The assault force, regardless of size, must quickly and violently execute the assault and subsequent clearing operations. Once momentum has been gained, it is maintained to deny the enemy time to organize a more determined resistance on other floors or in other rooms. The small unit leaders are responsible for maintaining the momentum of the assault, controlling movement, yet not allowing the operation to become disorganized. Enemy obstacles may slow or stop forward movement. Leaders must maintain the momentum by rapidly creating a breach in the obstacle, or by redirecting the flow of the assault over or around the obstacles.

a. **Approaches.** All routes to the breach and or entry point are planned in advance. The best route is confirmed and selected during the leaders' reconnaissance. The route should allow the assault element to approach the breach (entry) point from the enemy's blind side, if possible.

b. **Order of March.** The assault team's order of march to the breach point is determined by the method of breach and their intended actions at the breach (entry) point. This preparation must be completed prior to or in the last covered and concealed location before reaching the breach (entry) point. Establishing an order of march is done to aid the team leader with C2 and to minimize exposure time in open areas and at the entry point. An order of march technique is to number the assault team 1, 2, 3, and 4. The number 1 man should always be responsible for frontal/door security. If the breach has been conducted prior to their arrival the assault team quickly moves through the breach (entry) point. If a breach has not been made prior to their arrival at the breach (entry) point, and depending on the type of breach to be made, the team leader conducts the breach himself or signals forward the breach man/element. One option is to designate the squad leader as the breach man. If the breach man is part of the assault team, he is normally the last of the four men to enter the building or room. This method allows him to transition from his breaching task to his combat role.

(1) **Ballistic Breach (Shot Gun).** A suggested order of movement for a ballistic (shot gun) breach has the gunner up front, followed by the number 1 man, number 2 man, and then the number 3 man (team leader). After the door is breached, the gunner moves to the rear of the lineup and assumes the position of the number 4 man.

(2) **Explosive Breach.** A suggested order of movement for an explosive breach without engineer support is; number 1, number 3 (team leader), number 2, and then number 4 man. The number 1 man provides security at the entry point. The number 3 man (team leader) carries the demolition charge and places it. Number 4 provides rear security. After the demolition charge is placed, team members re-form in the original configuration and take cover around a corner or behind other protection. Team members can line up on either or both sides if there is adequate protection from the blast.

(3) **Mechanical Breach.** A suggested order of movement for a mechanical breach is the initial assault team in order, followed by the breach man/element. At the breach point the team leader will bring the breach element forward while the assault team provides local security. After the breach is made, the breach element moves aside and provides local security as the assault team enters the breach.

c. **Security.** Because of the three-dimensional threat associated with urban terrain, the assault element must maintain 360-degree security during movement to the breach (entry) point. If the assault element is to stop in the vicinity of the breach (entry) point to wait for the breach element to complete its task, the support element must maintain suppressive fire to protect the assault element.

d. **Assault Locations.** Entry at the top and fighting downward is the preferred method of clearing a building. This method forces the defenders down and out of the building where the support element can engage them. This method is only feasible, however, when access to an upper floor or rooftop can be gained from the windows or roofs of adjoining, secured buildings. Rooftops are treated as danger areas when surrounded by higher buildings from which enemy forces could engage the assault element. Helicopters should land only on those buildings that have a roof structure that can support their weight. If the structure cannot support the helicopter, soldiers can dismount as the helicopter hovers a few feet above the roof. Troops then breach the roof or common walls to gain entrance into the building. (If using explosives on the rooftop,

ensure cover is available to the soldiers.) They may use ropes or other means to enter the lower floors through the holes created.

**NOTE:** Soldiers should consider the use of devices and techniques that allow them upper level access without using interior stairways. These devices and techniques include, but are not limited to, adjacent rooftops, fire escapes, portable ladders, and various soldier-assisted lifts.

e. **Support Element.** The support element isolates the building with direct and indirect fires to support the assault element's move to the breach point. The support element covers mounted avenues of approach with antiarmor weapons, covers dismounted avenues of approach with automatic weapons, and suppresses enemy fires and neutralizes enemy positions to enable the breach team and assault element to move into position. The location of adjacent units must be considered in the emplacement of supporting fires.

(1) The support element uses smoke to obscure the movement of the breach team and assault element to the building. If possible, the smoke obscuration is maintained until the assault element has entered the building.

(2) Depending upon the ROE, just before the rush of the assault element, the support element increases suppressive fires on the objective and continues until masked by the advancing assault element. Once masked, fires are shifted to upper or lower windows and continued until the assault element has entered the building. At that time, fires are shifted to adjacent buildings to prevent enemy withdrawal or reinforcement.

(3) If the ROE are very restrictive, the use of supporting fires may be restricted to known enemy locations that have engaged the unit.

(4) The support element must also deal with civilians displaced by the assault, EPWs, and casualties.

#### 4-46. CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

The squad and platoon will conduct consolidation and reorganization immediately after each action where soldiers are engaged and ammunition is expended. Consolidation is the action taken by the squad or platoon to ensure its security, to prepare for a counterattack by the enemy, and to prepare to continue the mission. Consolidation in an urban environment must be quick in order to repel enemy counterattacks and to prevent the enemy from infiltrating back into cleared buildings or floors. After securing a floor (bottom, middle, or top), selected members of the unit are assigned to cover potential enemy counterattack routes to the building. Priority must be given initially to securing the direction of attack. Security elements alert the unit and place a heavy volume of fire on enemy forces approaching the unit. Reorganization occurs after consolidation. These actions prepare the unit to continue the mission by ensuring key leadership positions are filled and important weapon systems are manned. Many reorganization actions occur simultaneously during the consolidation of the objective.

a. **Consolidation Actions.** Squads assume hasty defensive positions to gain security immediately after the objective has been seized or cleared. Squads that performed missions as assault elements should be prepared to assume an overwatch mission and to

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support another assault element. Units must guard all avenues of approach leading into their area. These may include:

- Enemy mouse-holes between adjacent buildings.
- Covered routes to the building.
- Underground routes into the basement.
- Approaches over adjoining roofs.

b. **Reorganization Actions.** After consolidation, leaders ensure the following actions are taken:

- Resupply and redistribute ammunition.
- Mark buildings to indicate to friendly forces that they have been cleared.
- Treat and evacuate wounded personnel. Once the objective area is secure, begin evacuating noncombatants then enemy wounded.
- Process EPWs.
- Segregate and safeguard noncombatants.
- Reestablish the chain of command.

c. **Continuation of the Assault.** If the unit is going to continue with its original mission, its “be prepared/on order” mission, or receives a new mission, it must accomplish the following:

(1) The momentum must be maintained. Keeping momentum is a critical factor in clearing operations. The enemy is not allowed to move to its next set of prepared positions or to prepare new positions.

(2) The support element pushes replacements, ammunition, and supplies forward to the assault element.

(3) Security for cleared areas must be established IAW the OPORD or TACSOP.

(4) The support element must displace forward to ensure that it is in place to provide support to the assault element, such as isolation of the new objective.